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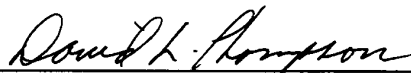
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Assessing Nehemiah's leadership

A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Biblical Studies Division
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Biblical Studies

Approved:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "David L. Thompson", is positioned above a horizontal line.

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by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The text of Nehemiah has long been used by biblical scholars and church leaders as an example of the execution of successful leadership skills. In an effort to focus this study, it has been determined that although there is much scholarly biblical information and literature available concerning the leadership skills of Nehemiah, as well as a multitude of behavioral communication theories which explore management/leadership styles, very little attempt has been made to combine the two fields of study as they relate to the book of Nehemiah.

This lack of such studies may suggest a number of different views taken by writers in both fields of discipline. First, scholars in the secular social science fields on the whole tend to discount the value of exploring the biblical text as a reliable means of gaining insight into the patterns of human behavior. Second, the social sciences tend to put more emphasis on and value in the development of "new works, methods, and theories" than on the close examination of already well established theories and text. Thirdly, some biblical scholars tend to discount the value of secular science whether it be physical or social as having either no place in biblical studies or theology, or no value to the study of the biblical text. This contention is one with which the author of this work finds disagreement. Albert Outler in his text, *Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit*, indicates that as Christians, we should feel free to utilize scientific truth as it would reveal "the wisdom of God in creation" to the

eyes of faith".¹ It is at this point which this work will attempt to intersect these two fields of discipline.

Nehemiah is a rich text which holds a wealth of theological meaning for the reader. The text is structured around three main units. The first is the reconstruction phase which is subdivided into a preparation phase, rebuilding phase, opposition to the work, and a completion phase. The second unit deals with the human factor and is subdivided into a phase of renewal of the people and a renewal of the covenant. The third unit deals with the formality of repopulation and dedication of the newly rebuilt city. In each of these units Nehemiah exemplifies his skills as a leader in the areas of problem solving, political negotiation, conflict resolution, and social reformation to name a few.

In evaluating the leadership style of Nehemiah in light of our current understanding of the social science theories which have deepened our understanding of the principles behind good leadership, it is hoped that the leaders of our churches, Christian schools and colleges, groups and organizations can come to glean a better understanding of how to manage and lead people from a biblical perspective.

¹Albert C. Outler, Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1974). Outler goes on to say that all the great Christian scholars had to grapple with the problem of secularism, the discoveries of human culture and how they could be related to and appropriated by credible Christian theology. He refers to such people as Origin (who coined the term "plundering the Egyptians"), Paul, Wesley, and St. Augustine who believed that "the thoughtful who understands the live core of the gospel and who is deep-rooted in the biblical witness to God's self-revelation is thereby entitled and encouraged to exploit the full range of secular literature, science, and philosophy -- always with a view to the enrichment of one's Christian wisdom and the enhancement of his effectiveness in communicating the Christian message.", 4-5.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to assess Nehemiah's leadership style by using the tools of critical biblical study and modern leadership theory in order to determine the book of Nehemiah's presentation of Nehemiah's leadership style and the possible implications this might have for the present day church.

Subproblems which may have bearing on the investigation of and determination of Nehemiah's leadership style, would include such items as a close investigation of the time period from which the literature of Nehemiah arose. In this analysis of Nehemiah's era, one needs to keep in mind such topics as how this literature relates to the Persian era, language usage within the text, the relationship of Nehemiah to Ezra and Chronicles, as well as the function and role of Nehemiah.

Other subproblems which may relate and have bearing on this study would be in the determining of how Nehemiah the person, becomes the change agent within the text. This could be further subdivided in looking at how he becomes the agent for change in the process of restoring the city, and the restorer and motivator of the people.

Furthermore, how do different models and theories of communication which relate specifically to leadership apply to our understanding of what makes a good leader?

Once these subproblems have been investigated, there needs to be a close examination of how the social theories of leadership relate and apply to a credible interpretation of the book of Nehemiah itself within the field of biblical studies. For it will be in the combining of these two disciplines of study that the leadership style will emerge.

Review of the Related Literature

This is an evaluation of the theological, biblical, and social science materials and resources which have been collected for the purpose of determining the management and leadership style of Nehemiah, son of Hachaliah, cupbearer to Artaxerxes king of Persia. Furthermore, this review will examine texts which pertain to modern management and leadership theories in order to determine how the text of Nehemiah, and the person Nehemiah, fit into these current day theories. The outcome of this research will be to contribute to the church's understanding of how the text of Nehemiah can provide insight for today's church leaders.

The book of Nehemiah is a far reaching and complex text when it involves the evaluation of the person Nehemiah and his leadership style. This is further complicated when one is determined to evaluate the text of Nehemiah in light of present day theories of leadership and to do so while interpreting the biblical book itself and maintaining its integrity. Part of this complexity stems from the tendency to first exegetically evaluate a text in light of our present day understanding of culture and society. For one to glean a true biblical understanding of the material presented in the Bible, which is germane to the text, it first needs to be evaluated in light of the people about whom the text is being written and the issues which were facing them in that historical setting.

It is from this point of understanding that one can then move into a discussion of Nehemiah the person. Who was he in relation to the king of Persia in and around the year 445 B.C.? What qualities did he possess which would allow him to be capable of leading a successful restoration of the city of Jerusalem? In what way did he restore the Jewish people? How do the

answers to these questions fit into the context of present day leadership and management theories? And in light of these questions, just who was Nehemiah the leader? These concerns become the central themes around which this work will revolve.

As mentioned earlier, a text must first be understood from the perspective of the time period in which it was written. This query makes up the second chapter in this thesis. Furthermore, there seems to be at least four areas of concern which need to be addressed in this chapter. First, how does the literature of Nehemiah, as found in the Masoretic Text (MT), compare and fit into the Ancient Near East (ANE) genres of biblical literature falling within the Persian time period? Philip R. Davis edits a text, *Second Temple Studies: Persian Period*, in which the contributing authors examine the meaning and importance of the temple within the context of the Jewish people living in that time period.² From this basis the text explores some of the sociological indicators that have recently come to light due to archaeological finds which have significant bearing on the Jewish community of the Persian period. The authors then move into a reconstruction of Jewish history based on the book of Ezra, a contemporary of Nehemiah.³ There appears to be some good dialogue in this text between each author which will shed important light on this period of history. G. W. Anderson in *Tradition and Interpretation*, further

² Philip R. Davis, ed., Second Temple Studies: Persian Period (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

³ It has become increasingly clear that no discussion of the history nor literary understanding of Nehemiah can be made without an examination of the literary prose of Ezra as well. Besides for the debate over whether Ezra and Nehemiah should be viewed as one text, as in the early Hebrew manuscripts, and the discussion concerning the authorship of I & II Chronicles which contends that the author of Ezra and Nehemiah was the Chronicler, Nehemiah places Ezra in an important priestly role within the text of Nehemiah (chapter 8:2 ff.). As a result, Ezra cannot be separated from the history of Nehemiah.

delves into the history of the Persian era expounding on the political climate of the time.⁴

The second aspect of a historical exploration into the Persian time period needs to be a careful evaluation of the MT. Probably one of the best known scholars writing on the biblical text which arises out of the fifth to third centuries B.C. is H.G.M. Williamson, author of the exegetical commentary *Word Biblical Commentary: Ezra, Nehemiah*.⁵ Not only does Williamson work the text exegetically, dealing with the literary form and structure, but he also invests a good deal of time addressing some of the historical aspects of Ezra and Nehemiah. Williamson approaches these books as two separate works of literature. Joseph Blenkinsopp writing for *The Old Testament Library*,⁶ although also looking at the literary structure of Ezra and Nehemiah, takes a different view of the structure, seeing them as one single work. This debate has bearing on this work in that it will determine to just what extent the text of Ezra will need to be utilized in the understanding of Nehemiah.

The third area which needs to be investigated in the literary evaluation of Nehemiah is the current views of the relationship between I and II Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. This debate seems endless as such authors as Eskenazi and Fensham, to name a couple, explore this issue.⁷ This too may be an issue which will need to be carefully examined as it raises such questions as

⁴ G.W. Anderson, Tradition and Interpretation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

⁵ H. G. M. Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary: Ezra, Nehemiah (Waco: Word Books Publishing, 1985).

⁶ Joseph Blenkinsopp, The Old Testament Library: Ezra - Nehemiah (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988).

⁷ This debate is prominent throughout the related literature of Ezra/Nehemiah studies. Tamara C. Eskenazi, "The Structure of Ezra - Nehemiah and the Integrity of the Book," Journal of Biblical Literature 107, no.4 (1988): 641-656. F. C. Fensham, "Some Theological and Religious Aspects in Ezra and Nehemiah," Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages 11 (1983): 59-68.

how the chronicler is related to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and who is the author of Ezra and Nehemiah? If not, did the chronicler write during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and if so, does the text of Chronicles I and II, reflect the social and political atmosphere of the day?

The fourth issue which falls under this section is a careful examination of function and role of Ezra and Nehemiah within the biblical text. In the series *Israel Alive Again*, Fredrick Holmgren takes a close look at the theological implication of these two texts.⁸ This seems to be a well covered topic in the Nehemiah studies as Richard Coggins, Martin Leesberg, and Roddy Braun also pick up on this subject.⁹

The third chapter of this work deals with the restoration of the city. Here too such authors as H. G. M. Williamson,¹⁰ Blenkinsopp,¹¹ and Holmgren¹² shed much light on what was involved in the reconstruction of Jerusalem. Among the considerations which need to be made concerning what was involved with the restoration was how Nehemiah approached the reconstruction from a political vantage point. Here such authors as Alfred Ivry, Aaron Demsky, Edwin Yamauchi, and Tamara Eskenazi, as well as others, approach this aspect of Nehemiah's endeavor to reconstruct worship in the

⁸ Fredrick Holmgren, Israel Alive Again: A Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1987).

⁹ Richard J. Coggins, "After the Exile," in Creating the Old Testament, ed. Stephen Bigger (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989): 229 - 251. Roddy L. Braun, "Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah: Theology and Literary History," Studies in the Historical books of the Old Testament, ed. J. A. Emerton (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1979): 52 - 65. Martin W. Leesberg, "Ezra and Nehemiah: A Review of the Return and Reform," Concordia Theological Monthly 33 (1962):79 - 90. Gives a good chronological time table of events in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

¹⁰ Williamson.

¹¹ Blenkinsopp.

¹² Holmgren.

city.¹³ An important aspect of the restoration process was not only the rebuilding of the walls, but of the temple as well. To that end all the commentaries address the importance of this aspect as well as authors like J. Stafford Wright in his book, *The Building of the Second Temple*.¹⁴

Closely related to the restoration of the physical aspects of the city is the spiritual and mental attitude of the people. One insightful means of determining how a leader cares for the concerns of a people is to examine their prayer life. Hugh Williamson takes a look at how Nehemiah does just that as he compares the prayers of Nehemiah to those of Moses¹⁵. Though other related literature on the book of Nehemiah links Moses to the prayers recorded in this book, these prayers serve to indicate the depth of concern Nehemiah has for the children of Israel. Other important aspects which involve discovering who the people of Israel are at that time and the role they may have played in the revival of the people and the restoration of the city can be done by examining the genealogical list which is found in the text. Here is a wealth of information which is all too often passed over in haste by biblical scholars. David Clines takes the time to examine the meaning of the genealogical list found in chapter ten of Nehemiah and points out the significance of this chronological listing of names.¹⁶ Another important

¹³ Alfred L. Ivry, "Nehemiah 6, 10: Politics and the Temple," Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period 3 (1972): 35 - 45. Aaron Demsky, "Pelekh in Nehemiah 3," Israel Exploration Journal 33, no. 3-4, (1983): 242 - 244. Edwin M. Yamauchi, "The Archaeological Background of Nehemiah," Bibliotheca Sacra (Oct. - Dec., 1980): 291 - 305. Tamara C. Eskenazi, "Ezra - Nehemiah: From Text to Actuality," Signs and Wonders ed. J. Cheryl Exum (Np: Society for Biblical Literature, 1989): 165 - 197.

¹⁴ J. Stafford Wright, The Building of the Second Temple (London: Tyndale Press, 1952).

¹⁵ Hugh G. M. Williamson, "Laments at the Destroyed Temple," Bible Review (Aug. 1990): 12 - 17, 44.

¹⁶ David J. A. Cline, "Nehemiah 10 as an Example of Early Jewish Biblical Exegesis," Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 21 (1981): 111 - 117.

aspect of who the people were in the text is to examine what role they played in the restoration process. Two authors who focus in on the workers in the book of Nehemiah are Ralph Turnbull, and Cyril Barber.¹⁷

The fourth chapter of this thesis deals with the social science approach of this work. An extensive bibliography list has been generated through the pastoral ministries department of Asbury Theological Seminary. This list contains references which pertain specifically to three different areas. These areas are texts which deal with organizational development and organizational management, leadership theory, and system theory. Adding to this collection is Stephen Littlejohn's text on *Theories of Human Communication*.¹⁸ Littlejohn presents a helpful overview of the different theories currently being used in the communication and human relation fields. Though the text does not go into great detail on any one theory, its review of the current theories will give the most pertinent information needed to understand these theories. Harold Myra's *Leaders* explores leadership from a Christian perspective focusing on a leader's character, personal challenges, leadership tasks, and pastoral tasks.¹⁹ *Nehemiah, the Executive* by Stanley E. Anderson helpfully examine leadership by exploring topics from the perspective of Nehemiah as a leader.²⁰ *Christian Leadership* by Bruce P. Powers centers on the concepts of leading people through change

¹⁷ Ralph G. Turnbull, *The Book of Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968). And Cyril J. Barber, *Nehemiah an the Dynamics of Effective Leadership* (Neptune: Loizeaux Brothers, 1976).

¹⁸ Stephen W. Littlejohn, *Theories of Human Communication*, 3rd ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1989).

¹⁹ Harold Myra, ed. *Leaders* (Waco: Word Books Publisher, 1987).

²⁰ Stanley Anderson, *Nehemiah the Executive* (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1954).

toward full maturity in Christian living.²¹ Another book that is quite helpful in any study of leadership is Kennon L. Callahan's book *The Church Leadership: Building on the Twelve Keys*.²² This book presents a view of Christian leadership by using the social sciences field of communication to further our understanding of what it means to be a Christian leader.

The course of this study will primarily focus on four theories of management/leadership. First, leadership styles as they are discussed in terms of the *three-dimensional theory of leadership*.²³ This theory contends that every leader is stylized by using one of three styles which consist of the authoritarian leader, the democratic leader, and the laissez-faire leader. This theory concentrates on what leaders do in these three styles of leadership. The second leadership style that will be examined is the *situational theory*.²⁴ This theory is linked to the three-dimensional theory of leadership in that it contends that a successful leader will utilize all of the styles found in the three-dimensional theory depending on the situation with which they find themselves currently facing. The third theory is an extension of the second, that of Fred E. Fiedler's contingency theory. This theory works from a situational perspective yet going further by claiming that a leader's effectiveness is based on their predisposition to being either task-oriented or relationship-oriented. The fourth aspect of this study will focus on the study of *cultures in organizations*: interpreting actions, practices, narratives, and

²¹ Bruce Powers, Christian Leadership (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979).

²² Kennon L. Callahan, Effective Church Leadership: Building on the Twelve Keys (New York: Harper San Francisco, 1990). In this book Callahan takes a look at Christian Leadership through such communication theories as McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y.

²³ Cheryl Hamilton, and Cordell Parker, Communicating for Results: A Guide for Business and the Professions (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1990).

²⁴ Ibid.

dialogues.²⁵ The main focus of this theory is to examine the culture which develops in any organization, to determine its effectiveness, or lack thereof, its internal management structure, and the means by which an organization operates and governs itself.

The most difficult aspect of this project may be in the bringing together of the two fields of study, the exegetical and the social science. In this endeavor, chapter five deals primarily with Nehemiah the leader, as he is presented in the biblical text. In what ways did he utilize the skills of a successful leader? How do the traits of Nehemiah as presented in the text itself compare with current communication theories? Authors such as Stanley Anderson, Edwin Yamauchi, Kenneth Tollefson, and Cyril Barber, to name just a few, explore this issue to some extent.²⁶ This chapter concludes with a summary of the findings which takes a look at what implications the book of Nehemiah may have for the present day church in light of this study. How does Nehemiah relate to the church leaders and what can they glean from his style of leadership? In what way does today's church and people compare or contrast to those found in Nehemiah? How can the present day proclaimer of the Word use the book of Nehemiah?²⁷ These chapters cover the breadth of this thesis. Though this literature review is not exhaustive, it does cover the

²⁵ Eric M. Eisenberg and H. L. Goodall, Organizational Communication: Balancing Creativity and Constraint (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

²⁶ Stanley E. Anderson, Nehemiah the Executive (Wheaton: Van Kampen Press, 1954). Edwin M. Yamauchi, "Nehemiah, A Model Leader," A Spectrum of Thought ed. Michael L. Peterson (Wilmore, Kentucky: Francis Asbury Publishing Co., 1982). Kenneth Tollefson, "The Nehemiah model for Christian Missions," Missiology 15, no. 1 (1987): 33 - 55. Kenneth Tollefson, "Nehemiah, Model for Change Agents: A Social Science Approach to Scripture," Christian Scholar's Review 15, no. 2 (1986): 107 - 124. Barber, lit. cit.

²⁷ David Seamands gives a sermon series which is an excellent example of how Nehemiah can be used homiletically. These tapes can be located in the Asbury Theological Seminary library in the audio collection.

major agenda of this thesis and identifies the most important works to be used in this study.

Theoretical Framework

"Leadership" shall be a generic term which is defined as only those theories this study has identified as pertinent to this investigation and will not include those theories which are not referred to in chapter four under current models of leadership and management styles.

It shall be assumed by the reader that discussion on the text of Nehemiah will center around a 445 B.C. (the Persian period) world view unless otherwise stated in the text throughout chapters two and three. An integration of fourth century B. C. and twentieth century perceptions appear in chapter five.

The term "leadership" in this study shall be defined as, one's ability to assess the current situation and needs of a person or group, in order to gain compliance from the person or group to meet the current needs of the said same through the stipulations set forth by the leader.

The term "group" in this study shall be defined as, a group of people who are independently bound together by their cultural heritage, and present economic and social condition, enacting behavior within their setting which ultimately affects the group as a whole.

The term ethnography will be understood as the study of group communication behaviors.

Methodology

The methodology which will be employed in the research of this thesis will consist of a review of the Persian Period in order to discern the cultural understanding by which the text of Nehemiah was informed. From this

framework the author will then conduct a careful exegesis of the book of Nehemiah. This exegetical work will be done primarily in the MT with a careful evaluation of the apparatus when necessary using standard historical, critical methodology. The objective of this will be to determine as completely as possible 1) The meaning of the book of Nehemiah on the whole, and within this context, and 2) how Nehemiah was able to act as a change agent in a city which lay in ruin and amongst a people who had not previously been able to rectify the conditions under which they lived.

This thesis will further employ a careful study of current social science theories, in chapter four, pertaining to leadership theories. Though there are many such theories in the social science disciplines which relate directly to leadership, it will be at the discretion of the author to determine which appear to apply most directly to the theme of this study. The purpose of which will be to determine in chapter five just who Nehemiah was as a leader amongst his people in light of today's understanding of leadership.

Finally, it will be the intent of this study to assess the leadership implications of the book Nehemiah and how the principles of leadership found being utilized by Nehemiah apply and are useful for the present church. This will be done by a close examination and evaluation of the work which was done in the first five chapters.

Organization

Chapter one Introduction to the problem

In chapter one, a clear and concise statement of the problem will be given. This will be followed by a review of literature which is directly related to the study of Nehemiah and current theories of leadership. A brief discussion of the theoretical framework and assumptions which will dominate

this work will follow. Then we will discuss the methodology being used in this study. Finally, this chapter will deal with the relevance and justification for such a study as this.

Chapter Two Nehemiah: The Persian era.

It is in this chapter that the literature of Nehemiah and its relationship to the Persian era shall be discussed. This investigation shall include such things as language usage in Nehemiah, the structure of the text in relationship to Ezra and I/II Chronicles, and the function and role of Ezra - Nehemiah within the biblical text. This chapter will conclude with a chronological listing of events in Ezra and Nehemiah to help orient the reader to what was happening and when it was happening within the text.

Chapter Three Nehemiah: The change agent.

Here we will examine Nehemiah's role in the restoration of the city and what was involved in the rebuilding of the wall. Included in an examination of the reconstruction of the city walls, we will look at how Nehemiah inspired the people of Jerusalem to recommit themselves to the cultic practices of Judaism and restore their national pride.

Chapter Four Current models of leadership.

This chapter will explore current theories of leadership and how they are currently seen to inform us today concerning the principles of effective leadership.

Chapter Five Nehemiah the leader.

In chapter five this paper will examine how the person Nehemiah and his skills and abilities fit within the framework of the current social theories of leadership. This chapter will also deal with the evaluation of the problem statement. In this evaluation it will be determined if the text of Nehemiah holds any implications for the present day church and its leaders.

Justification for the Study

Nehemiah exemplifies the traits and characteristic of a successful leader. But what makes Nehemiah's leadership successful? Is it his trusted position in the kingdom of king Artaxerxes as cupbearer to the king? Or his ability to envision and implement a plan, seeing it to completion? Did he encounter the Jewish people at the right time in history or was the political climate such which allowed for the successful completion of the city restoration? Was it that he was a faithful man of God who trusted in his divine calling to oversee the restoration of both the city and the Jewish people? Or was it a combination of some or all of these factors and/or others?

Today's undergraduate educational institutions, whether Christian or secular, teach the principles of leadership from a behavioral science perspective. Yet, little research seems to be carried over from one's undergraduate work to their formal seminary training in terms of studying the principles pertaining to leadership. Therefore, this work will examine how the research currently being done in leadership studies relates to and can be applied to our biblical understanding of leadership. In a sense, the Egyptians have left the field ripe for the plundering, yet few have taken advantage of the richness this realm of study offers. As church leaders approach their task of administering leadership in their churches, a careful examination of the qualities put forth by Nehemiah add depth and meaning to the term Christian leadership.

Chapter 2

Nehemiah: The Persian Era.

The Babylonian Experience,

Ezra-Nehemiah is our primary source of information concerning Judaism during the first and last quarters to the first century of Persian rule (538 to 432 B.C.). Although a large portion of time seems to go unrecorded, primarily that period between the rebuilding of the temple and the return of Ezra which constitutes about a half century, this work remains the primary source for life in the Jewish community. This goes without mentioning that the area discussed in these books geographically covers only about twenty-five square miles and leaves out mention of Jews living elsewhere. Examination of archaeological evidence has shown that Jewish communities in Samaria, Galilee, Transjordan, Babylon, Egypt, and elsewhere show the circumstances of these communities to have been quite different. As the history of Israel unfolds the exile of the Jewish nation is by no means a recent event. By the time of the writing of Nehemiah, the Hebrew people were living under the second foreign power since the time of their initial deportation from Judah in 597 B.C.¹ Although their Persian rulers were not holding them to any specific command to not return to Jerusalem, (as the Babylonians had) the city lay in ruin and few had returned to that site. In reflection on this point, their exile during the Persian era was in a sense a self imposed exile. With this understanding in place, it is important to summarize the events which led to the period of the exile.

¹ William F. Albright, The Biblical Period From Abraham To Ezra (New York: Harper & Row, 1949). Peter R. Ackroyd, "Archaeology, Politics, and Religion: The Persian Period," The Iliff Review 39, no. 2 (1982): 5-24.

With the weakening and collapse of Assyrian rule throughout Mesopotamia, and the ascension of Josiah in 640 B.C. to the throne of Israel, a time of great political and religious reform began for Israel as a nation. In 629, Josiah began to purge the country of all cultic activity which stood in contradiction to the worship of Yahweh. This reformation included the worship of Yahweh at shrines outside of Jerusalem and required that these worship practices be brought within the walls of Jerusalem and its temple. This basically meant all cultic practice was ceased but that of Jerusalem Yahweh worship. The reform extended into Northern Israel which included destroying the cultic installations at Bethel, that had been long under Assyrian protection. Israel once again seemed to enjoy a sense of independence and autonomy among the nations.

This sense of independence was to be short lived though, as in 609 B.C. Necho II, ruler of Egypt, marched on the Babylonian ruler Asshur-uballit in an attempt to gain control of Haran and what was left of the now defunct Assyrian empire. Whatever Josiah's intent was and whether he was acting independently or as an ally of the Babylonians is at best unclear, but what is known is that he went out to meet Necho in battle. This confrontation with the Egyptians, met with disaster for Josiah. Killed in battle, Josiah was brought back to Jerusalem, Judah became a vassal state of Egypt, and Josiah's son Jehoahaz was made king in his place. Jehoahaz ruled only three months though before Necho, in an attempt to consolidate his rule, deported Jehoahaz to Egypt and in his place installed his brother Jehoiakim.

With the death of Josiah and the exile of Jehoahaz, the people of Judah were greatly distressed. Jeremiah 22:10-12 and II Chronicles 35:25 give

expression to this dismay.² Following the exile of Jehoahaz ensued a period of great dissatisfaction by the Jewish people with the leadership of Jehoiakim who had been installed by the Pharaoh Necho. Most of the people despised Jehoiakim primarily because of his pro-Egyptian policy, his tyrannical rule, and the heavy taxation which he placed upon the Jewish communities living in and around Jerusalem.³ The continuing struggle between Egypt and Babylon over who would control the territory once ruled by Assyria continued to place Judah in the midst of the conflict which ultimately clearly fell to the Babylonians.

The Babylonian march on the Palestinian plain began in 605 B.C. and by 603 B.C., Jehoiakim transferred his allegiance from Egypt to the Babylonian ruler Nebuchadnezzar.⁴ Jehoiakim's loyalty to the Babylonian empire was shaky at best. In 601 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar moved against Egypt. Unable to fully overthrow Necho, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon. It was at this time that Jehoiakim, believing Babylon to have been severely weakened, rebelled against the Babylonian empire thinking he would be aided by the Egyptians. Whether this help was ever sent from Egypt is not known. What is known is that in December of 598 B.C. Babylon again marched on Judah and in that same month, Jehoiakim died. On the throne was placed his eighteen year old son Jehoiachin. In March of 597 B.C. Jerusalem surrendered, the leading citizens, governing officials, the king and his mother, and a large amount of material wealth were carried off to Babylon in the first of two

² John H. Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller, eds., Israelite & Judaeon History (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1977), 469.

³ Ibid., 469 - 470.

⁴ John Bright, A History of Israel (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 326.

deportations to Babylon. In Jehoiachin's place Nebuchadnezzar installed Zedekiah as ruler over what was left of the Judain state.⁵

Zedekiah's rule lasted but ten years. Rebelling against Babylonian rule, Zedekiah was not to last long. In 588 B.C. Babylon lay siege to Jerusalem. Though this siege was temporarily delayed due to an advance by the Egyptians, Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 587. Thus the second and most extensive deportation of the Jewish people took place. At this time Zedekiah was taken to Riblah in central Syria and brought before Nebuchadnezzar where he witnessed the execution of his sons and was then blinded. Zedekiah died in captivity. In that same year, Nebuzaradan, commander of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, was sent to Jerusalem at which time he leveled the city.⁶ Thus ends the self rule of the nation of Israel. Outside of the short period starting around 144-143 B.C. with the rise of the independent rule enjoyed under the Maccabees, it would be nearly three millenium before Israel would again experience independent rule.⁷

The Babylonian years would prove to be of particular crises to the Jewish people as Israel for the first time in its history would have to work through such theological problems as, the elimination of the Davidic dynasty, the destruction of the temple, and the loss of the land granted to them through the Mosaic covenant. Though these issues began to make themselves known before the final blow was delivered in 587 B.C., when the end finally did come Judah's official theology was helpless to give adequate explanation for these

⁵ Ibid., 327.

⁶ Ibid., 328 - 331.

⁷ H. M. Orlinsky, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible vol.3, (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 197-201.

problems, causing a crises in their belief that Yahweh was all-powerful and just. To these concerns, their present theology could bring no meaning.⁸

The Babylonian conquest and deportation was complete in the strictest of terms. People all across the land were driven into exile, executed, died of starvation or in battle. The whole of the region was leveled to the ground.⁹ Political, ecclesiastical, and intellectually gifted people depicted those taken into exile and represented the best of Jewish society contributed to the reason for their selection to be deported. Although these people were displaced from their home land, they were not intermingled with the peoples which surrounded them. Being located in southern Mesopotamia near Babylon, they were not free to do as they willed, but they were not under lock and key either. For the most part they were allowed to assemble and seek out a living as best they could.

Throughout the exile period, the theological understanding of the Jewish people emerged to view the exile through the eyes of their future restoration to the land of promise and the holy city Zion. John Bright puts it:

That hope never died. Though some undoubtedly soon resigned themselves to life in Babylon, the hard core of the exile community refused to accept the situation as final... It was also because their prophets, for all the dooming of the nation, had nevertheless continued to assure them that Yahweh's purpose was the ultimate restoration of his people -- precisely in the Promise Land.¹⁰

This hope created a national identity within these people which sustained them as a nation and caused them not to assimilate their culture into that of surrounding cultures. This instilled in them the understanding that belief existed in their faith that Yahweh would restore them as the covenant

⁸ Bright, 323 - 333.

⁹ Ibid., 344.

¹⁰ Ibid., 350.

community.. That the promises of Yahweh in a new and restored Jerusalem was yet to be a reality.

This was not to happen though as long as they remained a people in captivity. Thus, the days of Babylon were numbered. Despite the greatness this emperor achieved, it was to be short lived. With the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 562 B.C., Babylonian influence and power quickly declined. No ruler who followed Nebuchadnezzar could sustain the level of control over the Babylonian Empire as he had. It was most likely Nadonidus (556-539) who drove the final nail in the Babylonian Empire. With Nadonidus' installation as ruler of Babylon, he started an aggressive religious policy which promoted the Worship of Sin the moon-god. Due to the multitude of deities in Babylon this may have been an attempt to bring some kind of unity to the religious practice of the day.¹¹ In its weakened state, in dissention over Nadonidus' policies, Babylon was a land divided against itself and poorly equipped to handle its internal divisions let alone any external threats it might have to face.

Faith in Crises

For the first time since the exodus and becoming a nation, Israel faced total assimilation into the surrounding cultural context to which they have been thrust. For the first time in their long history of worshipping Yahweh, Yahweh seemed weak and defeated by another god.¹² How does a people whose whole existence which revolves around the idea that their god is the one and only God, justify the events of 597 and 587 B.C. primarily the loss of

¹¹ Peter R. Ackroyd, Israel Under Babylon and Persia (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 23.

¹²For summary of the different religious forms that were being practiced outside the Judaism faith see S. A. Nigosian, "The Religions of the Achaemenid Persia," Studies in Religion/Science Religieuses 4, no. 4 (1974): 378-386.

the Davidic monarchy, the promise land, and most importantly their center of worship, the temple?

The biblical and extrabiblical literature coming out of the Babylonian captivity sheds little light on Jewish life during these years. What does seem clear is that it was during this time Israel's sense of Jewish nationalism on a deeper religious basis was rekindled. In commenting on this resurgence of religious nationalism, Albright points out that we find the writings of this time to be:

... eloquently portrayed by Deutero-Isaiah, who combined Jewish nationalism with religious universalism; nowhere in earlier prophetic literature do we find such explicit recognition of the gulf existing between the One God, whose special favor had been extended to Israel, and the nonexistent deities who were mistakenly worshiped by the Gentile peoples.¹³

It was during this time that the Jewish people as a nation solidified what it meant to be a people of one God. They were developing a theological understanding of how as a chosen people, whose ritual and worship practices had centered around the temple, could now have meaning outside of that setting. The exile created in these people the tension that if full sacrificial worship was not possible, what did they do instead? While longing to be in the sanctuary at Jerusalem, how do they now worship in a meaningful way in light of the laws concerning sacrifices and other forms of offering and worship.¹⁴ It is from within this context it is believed that synagogue worship first took place and found a central place in the worshiping practices of the Jewish people.

What the exile did for these people, who now found themselves living along side peoples from other nations worshiping other gods, was to preserve

¹³ Albright., 87.

¹⁴ Ackroyd, 27.

the identity of who they were as a "people of God" worshipping One God. As these people began to seek meaning and understanding through their cultic traditions and practices, arising from their Pentateuchal history, four primary practices would begin to emerge and set them apart from those around them. These practices which could be set aside as particular to the Jewish community was the observance of the Sabbath, the following of strict food laws, its study of the Torah, and the practice of circumcision. Though none of these practices were unique to the sixth century B.C. all of them served to sharpen or redefine the meaning and importance of what it meant to be included in a community which saw itself as special and set apart by God.¹⁵ Yet, all that was changing theologically for the Jewish people, was once again about to see a change as the controlling national, political, and economic power was about to shift hands.

Persia

The weakening of the Babylonian position in the Mesopotamia region gave rise to the Median state which had been an ever present threat to the Babylonian empire. The Median state which was at this time ruled by Astyages, son of Cyaxares (585-549), had always been a threat to the security of Nadonidus' kingdom.¹⁶ Yet, it appears that when a revolt broke out in the Median empire, which was lead by Cyrus the Persian, Nadonidus was less than disappointed. Hoping for the elimination of Astyages, Nadonidus watched as

¹⁵ Ibid., 31.

¹⁶ This fact is attested to by all sources referred to in this study pertaining to the rise of the Persian empire. Ibid., Bright. R. N. Frye, The Heritage of Persia (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962). A. T. Olmstead, The History of the Persian Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). Robert W. Rodgers, A History of Ancient Persia (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929).

Cyrus caused the down fall of Astyages through an internal revolt of Astyages' army. This revolt is recorded by the chronicler of Nadonidus, stating that in the sixth year of Nadonidus, King Astyages:

called up his troops and marched against Cyrus, king of Anshann, in order to me[et him in battle]. The army of Ishtumegu (Astyages) revolted against him and in fetters they de[livered him] to Cyrus...¹⁷

By 550 Cyrus had managed to take over the Median empire and was moving against those empires which surrounded him taking Lydia in 546/7. Any satisfaction that Nadonidus may have had in seeing Astyages over thrown now viewed Cyrus as more of a threat than Astyages had ever been. Seeking an alliance with Egypt, Nadonidus hoped to build a defensive wall against Cyrus, but with the fall of Lydia so too the Babylonian/Egyptian alliance fell apart leaving Babylon to stand alone.

In 539 Babylon fell to the Persian empire. Cyrus entered Babylon a few weeks after it was captured and according to his own inscriptions was greeted as a liberator rather than a conqueror. To the now Babylonian subjects Cyrus is said to have never really been a foreign king, but their true king all along. In the language of the Babylonians he declares:

I am Cyrus, king of the universe, great king, mighty king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, King of the world quarters... seed of royalty from of old, whose rule Bel and Nabu love, over whose sovereignty they rejoice in their hearts.¹⁸

During Cyrus' first year as ruler in Babylon, he ordered the restoration of the temples and return of their gods to these sites which past Babylonian rulers had removed and destroyed. It would go to follow that the Jewish community, temple, and cultic practice be restored under this same order. In the year 537 B.C., Cyrus issued a decree that the Jewish temple be restored in

¹⁷ Frye, 78.

¹⁸ Olmstead, 51.

Jerusalem and its sacred vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had removed, be returned. At this same time, any Jew living in Babylon who wished to return to their home land was free to go.¹⁹

This decree may seem out of character for a conquering ruler, but it needs to be understood that the policy of Persian rule was not so much conquer and bring into submission, as was the Assyrian policy, but government through bureaucratic control. Thus, the Jews along with other national heritages were encouraged, and to some extent, financially helped in restoring that which the Babylonians had stripped from those they conquered. Allowing the Jews to return to their home land so quickly may have been more by design than generosity on Cyrus' part. As tension between Egypt and Persia was always at an uneasy watchfulness, allowing the Jewish community to reestablish itself, in effect set up a buffer between Cyrus and Egypt.²⁰

Cyrus the Great ruled over his empire for twenty-nine years falling in battle on the shore of the Caspian Sea in 530 B.C. The rule of the Persian empire passed by law to his oldest son, Cambyses. Cambyses' rule is marked by tragedy in light of his father's rule. Plagued by epilepsy from childhood, he had become unstable of mind in his adult years. As a result of campaigns into Egypt and an attempt on Ethiopia, Cambyses attempted to return home in the spring of 522 B.C. to intercede in a rebellion which had arisen in the capital city. Exhausted by the long campaign he had been involved in and weakened by his increasing medical disorder, Cambyses died in Syria by what is described as a self-inflicted wound he received while mounting his horse.²¹

¹⁹ Rogers, 63 - 64.

²⁰ Bright, 362.

²¹ Rogers, 71 - 87.

Gaumata now claimed the throne, but this was to be a short lived reign as Darius, son of Hystaspis, assassinated Gaumata in 521 B.C., placing Darius in control of the Persian empire.²² His claim to the throne did not come uncontested though as he had to fight to maintain control over people conquered by Cyrus and Cambyses but never brought fully under any kind of organized Persian rule. Being with both Cyrus and Cambyses on their military campaigns and reaching a high rank in Cambyses' army, Darius was well equipped to take control of any threat to his rule. Mutilating the faces of those who rebelled against him, he marked the first Persian ruler to resort to this type of cruelty toward those who opposed him. Darius ruled for thirty-six years securing the dominance of the Persian kingdom dying in 486 B.C. But this did not happen before he appointed his successor, Xerxes who could claim a direct blood line from Cyrus.²³

Xerxes ascended the throne in 485 B.C. at the age of thirty-five and he was greatly admired by his own people. As with the beginning of Darius' reign, Xerxes' first years were marred by rebellion in both Egypt and Babylon. Upon bringing these situations under control, he immediately set to work preparing an attack on Greece, Persia's long time rival. This met with disaster for Xerxes. Returning to Persia, he built his palace in Susa, from which he ruled his empire until his death in 465 B.C. at the hand of Artabanus. Attempting to place himself upon the throne, he in turn was killed by Artaxerxes I, son of Xerxes who was installed as king of Persia in 464 B.C.²⁴

Artaxerxes I, also called Longimanus, long hand, due to the fact that his right hand was longer than his left, found himself coming into an empire

²² Ibid., 87.

²³ Ibid., 145.

²⁴ Ibid., 145 - 172.

which had been severely weakened by a failed campaign to subdue Greece in the later days of Xerxes. To complicate matters for Artaxerxes, he appears to have had to quell constant internal rebellions against the central government. Egypt becoming harder to maintain control over and eventually losing to Persian rule, along with an ever deepening threat of a Greek invasion left Artaxerxes with little concern for the Jews. It is Artaxerxes, that Nehemiah serves as cup bearer to the king (Neh. 1:11). Artaxerxes died in 424 B.C. leaving the once proud empire in a weakened and vulnerable state.²⁵

Artaxerxes was succeeded by his son Xerxes II who ascended the throne under the name of Darius II reigning from 423 - 404 B.C. He left the kingdom in a weaker state than what he had received. The throne fell to Artaxerxes II in 404. He would be the last of the great Persian rulers dying in 358. He was succeeded that same year by Artaxerxes III. Artaxerxes III managed to rally and hold the empire together for a few short years, but for all practical purposes, the great empire of Cyrus had come to an end.²⁶

The Jewish Return

The initial return to Jerusalem was headed by Shesh-bazzar, prince of Judah and probably took place under Cyrus. This is recorded in Ezra 1:5. It is difficult to determine how many people would have left with Shesh-bazzar, but it is unlikely that any large group accompanied him. The reasons for the lack of any large scale exodus back to Judah vary, from the fact that the distance was great throughout with dangers and difficulties. The success of such a mission, without an emissary or written decree from the king in hand,

²⁵ Ibid., 173 - 192.

²⁶ Frey., 121 - 128.

diminished the possibility of successes. The primary reason that this was not a large group of people probably stems from the fact that by this time many of the Jew's had become well established in their business and were unwilling at this time to give up the wealth and status they had achieved.²⁷

This would lead us to believe that life under Persian rule was no different than it may have been had these people never left Judah. Since there is no great attempt made to migrate back to Jerusalem with Shesh-bazzar this would lead one to speculate that Persian Jews had well established themselves in the secular life of their new home. Business life seems to have been thriving and there is no record of any wide scale persecution of the Jewish people taking place during the time of Ezra nor Nehemiah. For all accounts, this would have opposed Persian policy, which seemed to have valued cultural diversity.

Shesh-bazzar was given charge to rebuild the temple, but for reasons not defined, Shesh-bazzar disappears from the text and is replaced by Zerubbabel who falls under the reign of Darius I.²⁸ It was during his reign that a clear sense of support for the rebuilding project is seen. Darius confirms the decree of Cyrus and goes further by providing the means and supplies needed to complete the restoration process. So by 515 B.C. the sixth year of Darius, the building was complete.²⁹

²⁷ Bright, 375.

²⁸ There is no real evidence given for the sudden disappearance of Shesh-bazzar and the emergence of Zerubbabel. Some theorize that he is assumed to be the same person as Zerubbabel, in fact many interpreters argue up to the present time for these two men to be the same person claiming Shesh-bazzar to be his Babylonian name while Zerubbabel his Jewish name. Others see a strong possibility that the name Shesh-bazzar as a scribal corruption of Shenazzar. Though these are just two possibilities, it does show some scholarly concern over the sudden disappearance of Shesh-bazzar. B. T. Dahlberg, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), 325-326.

²⁹ Ackroyd, 172.

This was the beginning of the restoration of the Jewish community, yet there was much lacking in Jerusalem to draw them back to their promised homeland. First, although Persian rulers appointed people of Jewish background to govern over Jerusalem, they did not allow the Davidic line to rule.³⁰ Also instrumental in keeping people from moving back was the fact that the walls of the city had not been rebuilt.³¹ This was due to the efforts of Samaritan officials who did not want to see the Jews restored back in Judah seeing this territory as their own. These were frustrating years for the Jews living in Palestine. Those who did return were faced with, "years of hardship, privation, and insecurity."³²

The next real effort which is taken in the reconstruction of Jerusalem takes place some time after 465 B. C. Ezra (4:7f.) points out that the walls of Jerusalem are being rebuilt. This causes quite a stir among some officials who see the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a threat and write Artaxerxes denouncing the work which is taking place in Jerusalem.³³ As a result Artaxerxes puts a stop to the building. Although Ezra does not see the completion of Jerusalem's refortification, that may not have been his intent all along. Rather Ezra's task in the life of the Jewish people was that of priest and scribe, thus his work may have laid in the area of cultic reform rather than political action. Albright points out that Ezra played an important role in establishing the

³⁰ Albright, 88.

³¹ Ibid., 89.

³² Bright, 365.

³³ Hayes and Miller, 527. It is unclear from the texts who the officials that are opposed to this rebuilding project are, but it is the speculation of the author of this paper that it was the Samaritans due to their openly hostile feeling toward the reintegration of the Jews back into Palestine. This seems to be supported by the fact that Ezra 4:9f. points out that in connection to this denunciation of the rebuilding of the walls there appears to be a number of non-Israelites living in Samaria and throughout the province "Beyond the River".

canonical Torah as the normative rule of Israel's faith. Although the first four books were most likely edited into their present form over the course of the exile, it was Ezra who probably introduced the Pentateuch into normative Jewish use and in part may be responsible for the way archaic cultic rituals were adjusted and introduced into actual temple ritual.³⁴

Nothing seems to have changed for the Jews living in Palestine by 445 B.C., the walls were still unbuilt, and the people were still living under adverse conditions (Neh. 1:3). Thus, the task of political reform would fall to one who had the political and administrative means to accomplish such a task. Nehemiah, a Jew having worked himself into a position of favor and influence in King Artaxerxes' court, approached the king seeking permission to travel to Jerusalem for the purpose of overseeing the refortification of the city. Being granted permission, Nehemiah gains documentation from the king allowing him to secure needed building materials. Once again opposition to the reconstruction project arose, but this time with Nehemiah and his political backing the construction process was not to be halted. Nehemiah was to succeed here where Ezra failed in large part due to among other things Nehemiah's knowledge of the political process. The text of Nehemiah tells its reader that he was appointed governor over Judah (Neh. 5:14; 10:1). What this did was to separate Judah out as a province independent of Samaria, giving Nehemiah the political backing of the Persian Empire and limiting the ability of Samaria to effectively inhibit that which was taking place in Jerusalem.

It is prudent to point out the importance of Nehemiah and the impact that he had on Jewish life during the Persian period. The Persian days were numbered by the end of Nehemiah's governorship, but it can be said of

³⁴ Albright, 95.

Nehemiah that he had a great influence primarily in the areas of political, social, and military reform during this time, and that his reforms set in motion the way for the further development of Judaism by consolidating it and adapting it to a self sustaining existence within a world empire. This was an imperative lesson for the Jews to learn, as never again (since the fall of Judah) would they enjoy the autonomy of independent rule.³⁵

Structure of the text in relationship to I/II Chronicles.

One of the most perplexing problems which arise in the reconstruction of Jewish history during this time period, from the biblical text, is in addressing the literary order of Ezra and Nehemiah and determining how I/II Chronicles relate to these two books. Since the end of the nineteenth century, there appears to be no clear consensus on this issue with theories ranging from Ezra-Nehemiah being an extension of the Chroniclers' writings which has been separated out of that work by later biblical scribes, to a clear cut division between the Chroniclers work, the work of the writer of Ezra, and the writer of Nehemiah.

Examining the first issue, that of the Chronicler being the original writer of all three books, four hypotheses have emerged and been used to support this view.³⁶ First, is the overlap of wording found in Ezra 1 and II Chronicles 36.

³⁵ H.G. Williamson gives a good summary of the Jewish history during the Persian era through the examination of the book of Nehemiah in, Richard E. Friedman and H.G.M. Williamson, eds., The Future of Biblical Studies: The Hebrew Scriptures (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 189- 205.

³⁶ Sara Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew," Vetus Testamentum, 18, no.3 (1968):330 - 371. For a good summary of Japhet and other theories concerning the authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, see James C VanderKam's article, "Ezra-Nehemiah or Ezra and Nehemiah," Eugene Ulrich, John W. Wright, Robert P. Carroll, and Philip R. Davies, eds., Priest, Prophets, and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of

Second, I Esdras begins with the thirty-fifth chapter of II Chronicles and runs through the fifth chapter of Ezra. Third, linguistically there is a great deal of similarity between the books in terms of common vocabulary, syntactic phenomena, and stylistic peculiarities. Fourth, there appears to be a uniformity of theological conceptions being expressed in these books. Here we will deal with theories one, three, and four.

Concerning the first issue, that of duplicate text, one explanation is that liturgical readings were not to end on too negative a note. Therefore, given the Chroniclers' dismal understanding of Israel's history in chapter 36:1-21, verses 22-23 were added as a liturgical device by later scribes to continue the story where the Chronicler left off. In time verses 22 and 23 were incorporated into II Chronicles from Ezra as part of the text. Other explanations explore the idea that the Chronicler wrote his work after Ezra/Nehemiah and incorporated the opening of Ezra into the conclusion of his work in order to point ahead to the future and give the text a sense of hope and point to God's fulfillment of the post-exilic restoration found in Ezra/Nehemiah.³⁷ Still others consider this repetition of verses to be a late phenomenon and the result of the division and canonical ordering of books in the Massoretic text and, therefore, having no bearing on the authorship of either Chronicles nor Ezra/Nehemiah.³⁸ Still others see the duplication of

Joseph Blenkinsopp (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1992), 55-75. Also Richard J. Coggins article, "After the Exile," in Creating the Old Testament: The Emergence of the Hebrew Bible, ed. Stephen Biggs (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 229 - 249.

³⁷ Hugh G.M. Williamson, "Did the Author of Chronicles Also Write the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah," Bible Review 3, no.1 (1987): 59. For further discussion on Chronicles see H.G.M. Williamson, "The Origins of the Twenty-Four Priestly Courses," in Supplements to Vetus Testamentum XXX, ed., J. A. Emerton (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), 251- 268.

³⁸ David N. Freedman, "The Chronicler's Purpose," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 23, no. 4 (1961): 436-437. H. G. M. Williamson in his book, Israel in

verses as the work of the Chronicler himself as he ties his work in Chronicles to his writing of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Although, the repetition of verses at the end of II Chronicles and the opening of Ezra do pose somewhat of a textual problem, the real debate in determining the authorship of these books falls under theories three and four, the linguistic and theological purpose of these texts.³⁹

One of the most frequently used arguments employed to advance the separation of authorship between Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah is that of linguistic and stylistic similarities and dissimilarities operating between the three texts. The person who probably did the most to bring this debate to the forefront of scholarly debate was Sara Japhet in her 1968 investigation on linguistics pertaining to the authorship of Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah.⁴⁰ Williamson expands on Japhet's study by pointing out five criteria which need to be established when studying the authorship of these books from a linguistic/stylistic perspective. 1) Despite how much work is done on the work of the Chronicler, Ezra, or Nehemiah, the amount of actual Hebrew

the Books of Chronicles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). Goes into a detailed review of the different theories surrounding the overlapping of Chronicles and Ezra. To this end it is his conclusion that despite the overlapping of text between the two books, there is not strong enough evidence to demand unity of authorship, but rather separate authors of these two books. Williamson comes to a similar conclusion concerning the repetition of material found in I Esdras and II Chronicles/Ezra. Given the evidence he is provided, I Esdras cannot be used to support the theory that the books of the Chronicler were continued and concluded in Ezra/Nehemiah. To this end all he is willing to conclude with certainty is that by the end of the second century B.C., both Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah were being treated as separate texts (pg. 36).

³⁹ These may be the most frequently used, but they are not the only ones that have been proposed, see Carl D. Evans, William W. Hallo, And John B. White, eds., Scriptures in Context: Essays on the Comparative Method (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1980), Carl Schultzy's essay, "The Political Tensions Reflected in Ezra-Nehemiah," 221-238.

⁴⁰ Japhet, "The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew," *ibid.*

known to us which comes out of this time period is really quite small. Although it is possible to determine differences between Hebrew of the post-exilic period, that of classical Hebrew or that which emerges from the Mishnaic period, caution needs to be taken when determining what period literary styles will be assigned to. 2) It should go without saying that any stylistic differences which are made must be drawn from both the text of Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah for them to have any value to the study of common authorship. 3) Because the amount of literature which arises out of this time period is quite small, any evidence which is presented should be restricted to the books which are presently under discussion. This is important in that any literary phenomena which arises outside the context of these books tend to raise the suspicion that late Biblical Hebrew is being dealt with rather than individual textual stylistic peculiarities. 4) Words or expressions which come under question should be expressed in other literature of the same period in a different way. The reasoning behind this is that opposition of word usage guards against the consequent misuse of vocabulary. This can be seen as biblical vocabulary often did not reflect other nonbiblical post-exilic literature, especially in terms of technical cultic language. 5) Finally, words which fall under the criteria mentioned above, must be determined to have the same meaning in both Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah.⁴¹

Williamson points out that in assessing authorship using the above criteria, the use of at least forty-seven words which appear in Japhet's linguistic list can be eliminated from Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah as they

⁴¹ Williamson, Israel in the Books of Chronicles, 39-40.

appear in one of these texts but not the other two.⁴² Another twenty-seven words can be eliminated from this investigation since they are used so extensively throughout the biblical text that they cannot be considered as idiosyncratic of any single author. Of the remaining words, which can be used to consider authorship of these books, the vast majority cannot definitively support the work of a single author. This does not go uncontested though, as scholars such as David Talshir also arguing from a linguistic point of view stand just as staunchly to their position of a single author.⁴³ Williamson points out that though his work cannot in and of itself be the definitive proof that Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are the work of different authors, as his study is based on only two works, he also points out that it is from these two studies that most scholars have based their investigations. It is from these studies that the evidence from style and linguistics seems to point to these books as being the work of different authors.

As compelling as the linguistic/stylistic arguments are for the multiple authors of Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah, it's the theological intent of these books which seem to make a definitive stance toward determining authorship. In basing one's conclusions on theological or ideological concerns in a text, Joseph Blenkinsopp points out that,

It is important to bear in mind that the final or canonical form of the material, ..., is a theological or ideological construct. In other words, it is one possible interpretation of the events described

⁴² Ibid., for a complete listing of these words and others mentioned further on in this study, refer to pages 41- 59. Williamson derives this listing of words from E. L. Curtis and A. A. Madsen, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Chronicles (ICC, Edinburgh: 1910), and S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (9th edition, Edinburgh: 1913).

⁴³ David Talshir, "A Reinvestigation of the Linguistic Relationship between Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah," Vetus Testamentum 38, no. 2 (1988): 165 - 193.

and, whatever its authority, it is not immune to challenge by alternative explanation from a historical-critical perspective.⁴⁴

What is the ideology of these books? In working toward an answer to this question, one must determine what the underlying intent of the author(s) of these books are. When looking at the work of the Chronicler it becomes evident that his primary concern is with Israel, its divinely appointed institutions and the persons which administer them in behalf of the people of Israel. Throughout the books of I & II Chronicles, the author is meticulous in his reporting of the Davidic line and the priesthood of Zadok. From the beginning of the Chroniclers work to the end of his work he remains consistent in the unity of his perspective on these items. From the reporting of the building of the first temple under David and Solomon to the second building under Zerubbabel, the parallels are literally too precise to be anything but well planned.⁴⁵

It is at this point that his story begins to fall apart. Beyond the account of Zerubbabel and Joshua, there begins to develop a great deal of confusion within the text. A seventy year gap in history appears with only an incidental reference to what happened (Chr. 36:22-23) over the course of those years, followed by the events of Ezra. This seems to stand in contrast to the meticulous writing style seen earlier by the Chronicler. For the Chronicler monarchy and prophecy go hand in hand. Here an important shift begins to take place. As we move into the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, no longer does there seem to be such an interest in the restoration of the house of David as the main factor for rebuilding and restoring the community. Another difficulty which stands out between the writings of the Chronicler and Ezra

⁴⁴ Joseph Blenkinsopp, The Old Testament Library: Ezra - Nehemiah (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 41-42.

⁴⁵ Freedman, 437-442.

Nehemiah is the lack of concern for prophecy. This is highlighted in Nehemiah 6:6-8 as Nehemiah distances himself from rumors that he is in league with the prophets in order to designate himself as king. This lack of continuity in ideology between the books of I and II Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah especially in regard to the Davidic line, the prophets, and priest tends to stand as fairly strong evidence for seeing these texts as being written by different authors. Such authors as Roddy Braun takes a look at this issue from the standpoint of what was seen happening between these three works is the work of later redactors within the text of Ezra-Nehemiah who consider themselves to be following faithfully in the steps of the Chroniclers as they work in the book of Ezra-Nehemiah.⁴⁶

Given the evidence of linguistical and stylistic differences as well as ideological differences between the books of I and II Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah, it is the determination of this author to take his stand in the camp which sees the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as being written by a different author than that of I and II Chronicles. The authorship of Ezra and Nehemiah is yet to be determined.

Function, Role, and Authorship of Ezra - Nehemiah.

In examining the text of both books, it appears that Ezra precedes Nehemiah. This is substantiated in Ezra 7:8 which says that Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of King Artaxerxes, while Nehemiah 1:1-3 and 2:1 indicate that he left the court of Artaxerxes in the twentieth year of the king's rule. This would have placed Ezra in Jerusalem at

⁴⁶ J. A. Emerton, ed., Studies in the Historical Books of the Old Testament (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1979), Roddy Braun's chapter, "Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah: Theology and Literary History," 52-64.

458 B.C. and Nehemiah there in 445 B.C. These dates are quite clear cut and seems to establish well defined arrival dates for both men, the problem arises as you read further into the texts.

As these texts are traditionally viewed, Nehemiah would precede Ezra, but this view has come under fire lately by many in the scholarly community. Some of the difficulties which have arisen are first, Nehemiah tells us that he rebuilt the wall in Chapter 7. Yet Ezra 9:9 tells us that when he arrived in Jerusalem he found the walls already rebuilt. Second, there is an assumption made that Ezra and Nehemiah come into contact with each other in the text. In reality they never do, they only appear to. Third, there seems to be a lack of recognition of the 5000 people who returned with Ezra in the reading of the census by Nehemiah in 7:5-73. If these people had arrived prior to Nehemiah's return, why were they not included in this census? Fourth, there seems to be some question concerning the genealogy of the High Priest though this may be explained as a hyplographical error which has omitted the name of one priest. This brings into question the dating of both Ezra and Nehemiah.⁴⁷ These are just a few of the difficulties which arise in trying to determine the chronological order in which these two book should fall in the scheme of history.

Questions concerning the ordering of the chapters within each book give rise to questions not only pertaining to authorship, but also editorial

⁴⁷ Hayes and Miller, 503 - 514. This discussion is quite complex and open to much debate. For further reading on this subject see, Tamara C. Eskenazi, "The Structure of Ezra-Nehemiah and the Integrity of the Book," Journal of Biblical Literature 107/4 (1988): 641-656. Hugh Williamson, "Did the Author of Chronicles Also Write the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah?" Bible Review, 3, no.1 (1987): 56-59. Carl Tuland, "Ezra-Nehemiah or Nehemiah-Ezra?" Andrews University Seminary Studies, 12, no.1 (1974): 47-62. Donald Robinson, "Was Ezra Nehemiah?" Anglican Theological Review, 37, no.3 (1955) 177-189. These are just a sampling of the literature available, but it gives a sense to the extent of this debate.

awareness as well. Why does Ezra material seem to get inserted into Nehemiah 8? Who is the editor? What is the literary purpose of the textual arrangement between the two books, and the theological reasoning for structuring the text in this way? From the start, most scholars who see these books as separate from I/II Chronicles will agree that there are two pens at work in the composition of these books.

It needs to be pointed out up front that the separation of the books Ezra/Nehemiah appears to be a Christian handling of the texts. In the Hebrew Bible, Ezra and Nehemiah together form one book. The scribal verse total (685) does not appear until after the last chapter of Nehemiah and the midpoint marking is found between Nehemiah 3:31 - 32. The earliest record of these two works being separated into two distinct books dates back to Origin and is reproduced by Jerome in his Vulgate. The Hebrew Bible did not make this distinction until the first printed editions appeared in the fifteenth century.⁴⁸

In Tamara Eskenazi's examination of the lists of names given throughout Ezra and Nehemiah, he contends that these lists were used within the literary context of these books in order to bring structural meaning to the books. Eskenazi states in the construction of her hypothesis,

The list, I argue, shape the book, affirm its integrity, and help differentiate Ezra-Nehemiah from Chronicles. They also express one of Ezra-Nehemiah's major themes, that is, the shift away from individual heroes to the centrality of the people as a whole.⁴⁹

In a summary analysis of his findings, he contends that the repetition of names found in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 create an inclusion which defines this section as a literary unit. This literature comes to define what is of utmost

⁴⁸ Blenkinsopp, The Old Testament Library: Ezra - Nehemiah, 38.

⁴⁹ Tamara Eskenazi, "The structure of Ezra-Nehemiah and the Integrity of the Book," 642.

importance for the writer of Ezra,-Nehemiah, the restoration of the people. He bases this conclusion on the fact that the grand celebration amongst the people does not take place in Ezra 6 at the completion of the temple, but only after the restoration of the temple, people, and walls are sanctified does the proclamation of Cyrus's decree come to fulfillment and the people are allowed to Celebrate (Neh. 8-13).⁵⁰ Although this view puts strong emphasis on the two books as a whole, it leaves little room for more than one author or at least one final editor for both texts. This tends to typify one position which is taken in this debate.

The other points of view tend to see these two books as the work of two or more hands. In summing up the different views concerning what has come to be termed the "Ezra Memoir" (EM), (that literature which the person Ezra tends to play a dominate role) Ezra 7-10 and Nehemiah 8, the following theories have arisen.⁵¹ In 1896 and later in 1910, C.C. Torrey contended in *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah*, that the EM could not be distinguished from that of the editorial work of the Chronicler found throughout the books of Ezra, Nehemiah , and I/II Chronicles. This led him to conclude that there was no distinct nor separate Ezra source, therefore doubts were cast upon the very historical existence of Ezra.⁵²

Torrey's last point met with much skepticism and may have caused him to have been taken less seriously. It was A.S. Kapelrud in 1944 writing, *The Question of Authorship in the Ezra-Nehemiah: A Lexical Investigation*, who based on Torrey's conclusions came to see the Ezra narrative, as we now have it, to have derived from the Chronicler or those writing in the Chroniclers

⁵⁰ Ibid., 647.

⁵¹H. G. M. Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary: Ezra, Nehemiah (Waco: Word Books, 1985), xxiv.

⁵² Ibid., xxviii - xxix.

circles. This conclusion was derived by others at around the same time and popularity for this theory grew.⁵³

It should be pointed out that over the years, only those with the most extreme conservative views have rejected Torrey's approach to the EM. More recent theories have shifted back to seeing the EM as the work of Ezra himself as he gives account for the work he has done for the Persian overlord from whom he received his commission. Only later was it reworked by people like the Chronicler framing parts of the text in the third person, and rearranging its order.⁵⁴

In many respects the book of Nehemiah has come under much of the same textual treatment and scrutiny as Ezra. In the broadest sense, Nehemiah 1-7, sections of 12:27-43, and 13: 4-31 have long been recognized as Nehemiah's first person account or one writing in his behalf and have come to be termed as the "Nehemiah Memoir" (NM).⁵⁵

Unlike Ezra, Nehemiah is seen more as standing on its own and there is much less debate over whether Nehemiah has ever stood as an independent source or not. Studies in Nehemiah have for the most part centered around Nehemiah's purpose for writing. These theories have ranged from the text being written to commemorate the achievements of the king in question, Nehemiah's need to justify his work with the king, to a comparison of the NM to a psalm type known as the "Prayer of the Accused" which is an explanation for the circumstances for which Nehemiah finds himself.⁵⁶ This tends to

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., xxx. Also see Leslie McFall, "Was Nehemiah Contemporary With Ezra in 458 BC?," Westminster Theological Journal 53 (1991): 263-293.

⁵⁵ Ibid., xxvii.

⁵⁶ Ibid., xxv.

show the diversity and attempts which are being made to compare the NM to other textual literature of the time period.

F. C. Fensham takes a different approach to this debate by looking at the theological concerns of Ezra - Nehemiah. He contends that these two books are basically theological works and makes no distinction between them as two separate works based on their underlying theology.⁵⁷

Williamson proposes that the text of Nehemiah was developed in two stages, representing a mix of literary genres. This would explain the lack of success in comparing the NM with any other single text. His contention is that Nehemiah 2:6 represents Nehemiah's original commission to rebuild the walls and was intended to be for a relatively short length of time. By no means was a twelve year governorship in the mind of either the king nor Nehemiah. Therefore, the first portion of the NM was written as a report to the king concerning the fulfillment of the king's commission. Later Nehemiah reworked his original report accounting for the differences in style found later on in the text.⁵⁸

What has been presented in this section is by no means an exhaustive study on the literary construction of I/II Chronicles, Ezra, or Nehemiah. It is sufficient to say at this time that this is a sampling of the theories and proposals from which the scholarly community are presently approaching these books. In view of the fact that the question of date, authorship, and composition of each of these works could comprise a thesis of its own, and since the interests of this study lie principally elsewhere, we will not pursue the matter further. We have a sufficient review of proposals engaging

⁵⁷ F. C. Fensham, "Some Theological and Religious Aspects in Ezra and Nehemiah," Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages 11 (1983): 59-68.

⁵⁸ Ibid., xxvi - xxviii.

scholarly research in these works to situate the approach of this thesis. It should be said by way of summary that after this brief investigation, it is the conclusion of this author that due to the fact that there is less debate over Nehemiah as a source on its own, separate from the book of Ezra and the different underlying theological concerns which operate between the two books, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are most likely the work of two separate authors which have been joined together through the work of a redactor. For the purpose of this study though, Ezra will not be considered as a major influence and the book of Nehemiah, as found in the Masoretic text, will be the primary source for determining the leadership style of Nehemiah.

Chronological List of Events

This section is meant as a brief summary of the history associated with Ezra and Nehemiah. In order to save space and be as concise as possible, this history will be presented in table 2.1.⁵⁹

Table 2.1

539/538 B.C.	Capture of Babylon and the Cyrus Edict. Since the Persian throne year began with Tishri, this Edict was probably issued in the first year of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1)
537	Building of the altar, first offerings, Tabernacles, all during Tishri of second year of Cyrus (Ezra 3:1, 6)
536	Temple foundations laid by Sheshbassar, second month of year after return, late spring. (Ezra 3:8 cf. 5:16)
536-520	Interruption of temple-building, probably from internal causes (Ezra 4:5, 24)

⁵⁹ Martin W. Leesberg, "Ezra and Nehemiah: A Review of the Return and Reform," Concordia Theological Monthly 33 (1962): 79-90.

- 520 Second attempt to build temple, dated from Hag., first day of sixth month, second year of Darius. Offer of help, refusal, and accusation to Tattenai (Hag. 1:1 cf. Ezra 4:1-4)
- 516 Temple completed, third Adar, sixth year of Darius (Ezra 6:15)
- 485 Letter of general accusation to Xerxes (Ezra 4:6)
- 446/445 Abortive attempt to build the walls of Jerusalem under Artaxerxes I (Ezra 4:7-23)
- 445 Hanani brought news to Nehemiah; Chislev, twentieth year of Artaxerxes I (Neh. 1:1)
- 444 Nehemiah received permission to build wall of Jerusalem; Nisan, twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Neh. 2:1-6)
- 444 Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem, presumably the same year, to take full advantage of king's favor (Neh. 2:11)
- 444 Wall finished, 25 Elul, no year stated but done in fifty-two days, so probably the same year (Neh. 6:15)
- 444 Appointment of Hanani as commandant, also of singers, gatekeepers, and Levites (Neh. 7:1, 2)
- 444 Census begun, old list found (Neh. 7:5 ff.)
- 443-432 Slow completion of all the towers and ramparts of the wall, strengthening first rapid work, repopulation of the city, approximate places of residence of the Jewish community established (Neh. 11)
- 443-432 Slow establishment of social justice in community (Neh. 5)
- 432 Nehemiah went to Babylon (Neh. 13:6)
- 432-428 Eliashib admitted Tobiah to temple (Neh. 13:4, 5)
- 432-428 Joiada became high priest; Joiada's son married Sanballat's daughter (Neh. 13:28)
- 427 Twelfth of first month, no year stated, Ezra departed from Ahava. From following data, this was same year as arrival in Jerusalem, hence thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes, accepting the slight textual emendation (Ezra 8:31)

- 427 Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, fifth month, thirty-seventh year of Artaxerxes I (Ezra 7:8)
- 427 Public complaint concerning mixed marriages (Ezra 9:1)
- 427 Assembly in regard to mixed marriages, twentieth day of ninth month, no year stated, but likely the year of Ezra's arrival (Ezra 10:9)
- 426 Divorce actions completed, first day of first month, no year stated, immediate action likely (Ezra 10:17)
- 426 Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, no date stated (Neh. 13:7)
- 426 First reading of the Law, first of seventh month, no year stated, presumably soon after Nehemiah and Ezra had joined forces (Neh. 8:2)
- 426 Followed by another session the next day (Neh. 8:13)
- 426 Feast of Tabernacles, no year stated (Neh. 8:18)
- 426 Fast and confession, twenty-fourth of this month (Neh. 9:1)
- 426 The sealing of the covenant (Neh. 10)
- 426 Dedication of the wall; no date is given, but likely after the journey to Babylon (Neh. 12:27)
- 426,ff. Final reforms; Tobiah cast out, tithes and Levites, Sabbath observance, final settlement of mixed marriages (Neh. 13:8-31)

setting. In looking at this very phenomenon, James Barr states, "In Israel at any rate much of the biblical language is unspecialized."²

Yet, just because this language arises out of the earliest language of the Hebraic tradition and tends to be seen as unspecialized, does not mean that it cannot convey with specificity the truths by which it was meant to set before humanity. It is by the very fact that this language uses a common language, operates out of common cast of mind and mode of expression that is dominate throughout the biblical text that it can convey its message to humanity across the centuries.

This message comes into conflict with its present Western readers not from a lack of clarity which arises out of the text, but through the world view by which it is approached. Barr points this out as he contrasts Greek with Hebrew thought. Listing four points he says, first there is a contrast between the static and dynamic. Greek thought focused on contemplation while Hebrew focused on action. Although he makes these generalizations while contrasting these two world views, he also makes it clear in his discussions on lexicography that one cannot force linguistic meaning onto either a word or a culture overall. It is important to remember that semantic meaning cannot be used to force a culture into a world view, but an ancient world view must arise from our understanding of how a culture utilized its language. Therefore, our understanding of a culture's use of language must remain somewhat elasticitic and flexible.³

² James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 3.

³ Ibid., 10-11. James Barr, "Hebrew Lexicography," in Studies on Semitic Lexicography, ed. Pelio Fronzaroli (Istituto Di Linguistica E Di Lingue Orientali: Universita Di Firenze, 1973), 103-126.

Keeping this in mind, Barr goes on to point out that these two world views secondly, was a contrast between the abstract and the concrete. Here again these two world views came into conflict as the Greek mind set worked in abstracts, while the Hebrews looked for the absolutes.⁴

Thirdly is their differing conceptions of humanity and personhood. For the Greek, personhood is seen in terms of duality with the imprisoned soul confined to a mortal body. For the Hebrew, the soul is the living person in the flesh. Here both the flesh and the soul make up the totality of a living being with the flesh being the outward visible expression of the other, the two are inseparable.⁵

Finally, in summing up, Barr states that Greek thought is the contrast between the "divisive, distinction-forming, analytic" type of thought while Hebrew thought focuses on totality.⁶

Before moving into the book of Nehemiah, it is important to make one final comment concerning the language of Nehemiah's time period. Although the text has been written in Biblical Hebrew, this is not to say that it was the common language of the day, or for that matter that it was even being used as a spoken language of the time. As one looks into this phenomenon it will be discovered that although those deported from Jerusalem in 586 B.C. assimilated the language of their new cultural setting by the time they returned to Jerusalem their spoken language was Aramaic.⁷ Segal gives the explanation for this as:

⁴ Ibid., 11-12.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 13.

⁷ Werner Weinberg, Essays on Hebrew (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993). A. T. Olmstead, History of the Persian Empire (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948). John H. Hayes and J. M. Miller, eds., Israelite and Judaeon History (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1977).

There can be no doubt that the authors of Chronicles, Esther, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Sirach and the Psalms of Solomon did not use BH in their everyday life. BH was then only a literary and artificial medium of expression which they had acquired in the schools from the study of the old sacred literature.⁸

It was during this time of exile that the written form of the language began to undergo changes. The Old Hebrew-Canaanite script gradually gave way to a squarer Aramaic script which is what we today recognize as Hebrew script.⁹

Chapter I

Restoration of the City

This book opens with a detailed listing of person נְחֻמָּיָה בֶּן-חֶלְכִיָּה, meaning "The Lord has comforted"; time, בַּחֹדֶשׁ-כִּסְלֹו שְׁנַת עֶשְׂרִים; and place, שְׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּירָה. This verse gives strong indications of being a first hand account by the use of the independent first common singular pronoun אֲנִי these tendencies are predominate throughout the entire book with the exceptions of chapters 8-12:26.¹⁰

This opening sentence is common of a narrative which opens with a sequence of temporal modifiers that are placed before the clause they modify and are introduced by a waw-conversive plus some form of the verb הָיָה. This is then followed by the sequential form of the main narrative. Other occurrences of this opening waw-conversive can be found in Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, Ezekiel, Ruth and Esther.

⁸ Segal, 13.

⁹ Weinberg, 14.

¹⁰ William S. LaSor, Handbook of Biblical Hebrew (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978). Ronald J. Williams, Hebrew Syntax: An Outline (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967). Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990).

Nehemiah opens with the jussive form of יָבֹא (returned, 1:2). Little more is said of those who returned to Nehemiah with their news from Jerusalem. It should be noted that though Hanani is called "my brother," this could indicate national identity and not necessarily family relationship, though 7:2 seems to indicate that these two men were in fact brothers.

Who are the שְׁבִי (capture, 1:3) which were the שְׂאֵר (remnant)? Williamson expresses this language to technically say, "belonging to the remnant" bringing the meaning to this phrase, "those who have escaped from the exile in which they once were, and so now belong to the remnant."¹¹ By some this view leads to the belief that this remnant is those who were never taken into exile. This view has some problems in and of itself, given that those who were not taken into captivity by the Babylonians were the lower class peoples. Those who did not move from the area during the 587 B.C. deportation were in many cases, assimilated into the surrounding culture and thus would not have been considered as part of the remnant. Blenkinsopp contends that Nehemiah, in general, unlike Ezra is not as concerned with return from exile.¹² Nehemiah's concern is with the rebuilding of the city. Williamson on the other hand sees this as a general statement which makes no distinction in who these Jews are. He states, "the context is sufficient to make clear that the remnant terminology is applied loosely by Nehemiah to all surviving Jews in Judah..." Both these views seem to emphasize Nehemiah's question concerning those presently in Judah was for them in general and not any specific group.

Nehemiah's prayer which takes shape in 1:5-11 tends to be very Deuteronomic in nature. This is amplified through Deuteronomic word and

¹¹ H. G. M. Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word, 1985), 171.

¹² Joseph Blenkinsopp, Ezra-Nehemiah (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1988), 207.

phrasing (Deut. 7:21; 10:17) such as הגדול והנורא, and שמר ... מצותיו (Deut. 7:9). All move in a liturgical fashion expressing God's greatness and kindness toward those who love and keep his commandments. This leads one to believe that the Deuteronomic literature was quite prevalent, even amongst the laity, during the exile period.

This prayer moves from acknowledging God's greatness (1:5) to Nehemiah's petition. He does this by recognizing his and his families' responsibility for the sins which have been brought against God (1:6-11). This recognition is not an implication of personal sin, but encompasses the nation of Israel as a whole. Here Nehemiah takes upon himself an almost priestly role of assuming the responsibility of the sins of the nation.

Verse eight moves into Nehemiah's first petition reflecting back to the condition of those who are in Judah and in Jerusalem. The adjectives גדול and רעה, as well as, the noun חרפה lead Nehemiah to call on God to זכר. This "remember" language is also a reflection of the Deuteronomic language (Deut. 5:15) where remember is contrasted with forgetting. Nehemiah calls on God to remember that He has been faithful to His word, to scatter those who were unfaithful, but that He also promised to restore them as well.

As most examples of the Qal referring to זכר refer to inner mental acts, the sense in which Nehemiah may be using this verb can best be stated as "pay attention to" the troubles of your people.

Nehemiah points out here that not only is this scattered people those whom he has promised to restore but that this place which is in so much turmoil is the place which Yahweh himself declared as the place, "I chose to dwell and there My name will be." Using the D-infinitive construct שכן, Nehemiah petitions Yahweh by saying that, "not only have you promised to restore your people, but this is also where you have said you will establish

your name." This implies that not only is His divine presence to be there, but it is to be amongst His people as well.

Nehemiah's second petition moves from the macro of the Jewish people as a whole to the micro of seeking success in his audience with the king (1:11). This appears to be a fairly tenuous situation for Nehemiah as his request is based on the Qal imperative form of נָתַן giving this phrase the sense of a strong request as he petitions God in prayer, "grant compassion to the one whom I am about to approach."

Some debate has arisen concerning the text's use of the phrase, זֶה הָאִישׁ this man. In looking at the text, it is the conclusion that Williamson's approach to this debate is probably the closest to what the phrase is really getting at. Where Rudolph sees the term "this man" is reference to the Persian king as a reflection of Jewish disdain for Persian rule and its pagan monarchy, and others see it as legal terminology which is being presented in defense of Nehemiah when he was accused of disloyalty in 6:6. Still others such as Blenkinsopp reject the idea that the prayer was originally Nehemiah's to begin with and insists that the prayer was never meant to be read by the political authorities at all. Williamson contends that in Nehemiah's writing he simply reproduced a neutral word when referring to the king in his prayer.

Chapter II

The NM begins chapter two with a statement of time. The Month of Nisan the Twentieth year of Artaxerxes, during a time when Nehemiah was serving the king. The text continues to show first person narrative as the writer uses a string of Qal first common singular verbs to express his actions, וָאֶשָּׂא, I took; וָאֶתַּנֵּן, I gave; וָהָיָה, came to pass (2:1). Questions raised by this verse are worth looking at from a leadership point of view. First, why is this the first time

Nehemiah allows his emotions to show forth? The possible answers to such questions could be that this is the first time Nehemiah is before the king since learning of the fate of his fellow Jews in Jerusalem. This could be because Artaxerxes has been away or because within the system which Nehemiah served this was the first opportunity for him to have been personally in the presence of the King. Each possibility is plausible but unlikely. It seems highly unlikely that Nehemiah being in the ultimate trust of the king (or any hearer) would only have contact with him once every four months. Rather it appears here that the timing of Nehemiah to show his distress is by design rather than opportunity.

Nehemiah is setting the stage here for accomplishing his plans. He is about to ask for the services of the king to supply him with not only the time needed to rebuild Jerusalem, but the materials as well. At first reading the mention of the month and year at the head of this verse may seem only introductory, but a closer examination would help us to see further into the design of Nehemiah. It was the custom of Persian kings to grant favors at certain feasts of the year. It appears that it was just such an occasion for which Nehemiah had been waiting. Nehemiah seems to choose this precise time with great care.

Nehemiah continues his skillfully thought out approach by raising the king's curiosity over his apparent distress (2:2). The perception of the king is well to take note of here as well. In first seeking the reason for Nehemiah's distress he asks of his physical condition. The question this raises is one of personal concern. Was the king concerned for Nehemiah's well being or that of his own? As cupbearer or official food taster, it was Nehemiah's responsibility to make sure the food that the king would eat was safe for consumption, therefore, the threat of assignation through poisoning was

always a real possibility for the king. When he had satisfied himself that Nehemiah's distress was not one of illness or a plot against himself, he calls Nehemiah to explanations when he declares this is nothing more than illness of the heart. It is here that the true emotions of Nehemiah show through, מאד ואירא הרבה, "and it caused me very much fear". This fear may well be the realization by Nehemiah that he had now made his move and there was no turning back. Rejection by the king could well mean his own death. Here Nehemiah is forced into his move not wanting to lead the king to believe that this distress is aimed toward him, Nehemiah formulates his response. The emotions expressed at this point are those which anyone who has just set in motion a project of immense proportion may have. This is Nehemiah's moment of truth. The one opportunity for him to sell his project to the king or go bust. In response to this Nehemiah wants to make sure that Artaxerxes knows that in no way does his distress pertain to him, while at the same time pursuing his own interest, thus the expected sign of respect, "let the king live forever!" He immediately follows this statement with a declaration of the problem.

It is interesting that Nehemiah starts this explanation with reference to the grave site of his ancestors (2:3). It may be Nehemiah's first concern to see that those living in Jerusalem under duress are cared for, but he approaches his objective of restoration from a point of contact which King Artaxerxes can understand, the desecration of the graves of one's ancestors. This was of particular importance to Persian rule as archaeological evidence has uncovered.¹³ With this statement he has aroused the direct interest of the king and made a point of contact that the king could sympathize with.

¹³ Sylvia A. Matheson, Persia: An Archaeological Guide (Park Ridge, New Jersey: Noyes Press, 1973), 221-224.

It should also be noted here that at no time does Nehemiah mention the name of his ancestor's city. The king is well aware of Nehemiah's national origin, he is also well aware of the history behind Jerusalem as being a troublesome city (Ez. 4:6-16).¹⁴ Using the Piel participle מִבְּקֶשׁ in connection with the interrogative מָה, "what are you seeking," this clause may be read "What are you seeking in your distress? (2:4)". Nehemiah's first response was to ask for credence to return to Judah, not to rebuild the walls for the protection of the Jewish people, but to restore the burial site of his ancestors (2:5).¹⁵

From this point forward in the text, it is Nehemiah who takes the initiative. Immediately after setting the time for which he will be gone (2:6), having set the stage for his request, Nehemiah proceeds to ask for those things necessary to carry out his task. First, he needs safe passage to Judah (2:7). It is likely that this letter did not only carry with it a decree for passage, but also the understanding to all whom he may encounter that he acts with the king's permission. Secondly, Nehemiah asks for permission to use materials from the king's parks to rebuild the city (2:8).¹⁶

Apparently Nehemiah's journey went without incident as only one verse deals with the entire trip (2:9). This is not to say that Nehemiah's intent went unnoticed though as Sanballat and Tobiah were quite displeased that someone had come seeking the welfare of the Israelites (2:10). What is it that brings

¹⁴ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982). William S. LaSor, "Jerusalem," 998-1032.

¹⁵ Much is made of the presence of the Queen in verse six which this paper will not address. Let it be sufficient here to say that most commentators agree that it was to Nehemiah's benefit that she was with the king this day.

¹⁶ Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary, 181. Williamson points out here that if Nehemiah came from a family of means, it would not be an unreasonable request for him to make in seeking materials to rebuild his family estate.

such distress to these two men? As these two men will play a wider role later in the narrative it may be good to look at them at this time. Sanballat with this Babylonian name (the god sin gives life) most likely descended from a Northern Assyrian family dating back to the eighth century. It may be that Sanballat's attempt to compromise Nehemiah's mission arose more from political concerns rather than religious ones. It appears that since the intervention of Samaritan government (Ez. 4:23-24), they may have gained some sort of control over the providence of Judah with Sanballat possibly even being Governor of Samaria.¹⁷ Contacts of some influence within Jerusalem (6:10-14) and the fact that his daughter was married into a family of high priests (13:28) seems to suggest his position of authority.

Concerning Tobiah, the servant, it is somewhat ambiguous as to what this title means.¹⁸ Here there seems to be no direct evidence that this Tobiah is in any way linked to the Trans-Jordan family of later times and thus he cannot be assumed Governor over this region. It is logical to assume that what Nehemiah means by עבד here is that Tobiah is Sanballat's servant.

After a three day wait, Nehemiah set out to inspect the walls of the city (2:11-16).¹⁹ The fact that he goes out by night may indicate his level of awareness for security, given the fact that as of this time, he has told no one of

¹⁷ Frank M. Cross, "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," Journal of Biblical Literature 94, no. 1 (1975): 4-18.

¹⁸ Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary, 183.

¹⁹ There is considerable debate as to the actual size of the city, and the location of its gates at the time. For further study see Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary; Blenkinsopp, Ezra-Nehemiah; Nicholas A. Bailey, "Nehemiah 3:1-32: An Intersection of the Text and the Topography," Palestine Exploration Quarterly (1990), 34-40.; H. G. M. Williamson, "Nehemiah's Walls Revisited," Palestine Exploration Quarterly (1984): 81-88.; David Adan (Bayewitz), "The 'Fountain of Siloam' and 'Solomon's Pool' in the First-Century C.E. Jerusalem," Israel Exploration Journal 29, no. 2 (1979): 92-100.; Kathleen Kenyon, Digging up Jerusalem (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974).

his intent, nor his reason for being in Jerusalem (2:16). It is possible that due to the threat that Sanballat and Tobiah appear to perceive him as, it is not hard to see the need for Nehemiah's secrecy.

After a complete inspection of the city, Nehemiah then brings his plans to the people. Chapter two, verse seventeen indicates that as he did this he first points out to them the condition of their lives from a personal level, identifying himself with the people **רָאִים עֲרֵעָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנַחְנוּ**. Two key words are used in this phrase which are meant to point back at the people, the first is **אֲנַחְנוּ**, "we". Here Nehemiah identifies himself with the people. No ground is ever gained in the use of the second person "you" when one is trying to gain cooperation and insight into the present living condition of a person or persons. The second is the use of the word **רֵעָה**. Here Nehemiah not only personalized their condition, but he points it out to them as well, "we are in misery".

It is at this point he uses a fairly strong charge against the people living in the city. In Nehemiah's assessment of the conditions under which this community is now living, he sees the people as being a **חֲרִפָּה** "reproach". In most cases this word is used in the sense of casting scorn.²⁰ Yet, Nehemiah in his forceful approach to their present condition relays to them their favor under the hand of God as he tells them the words of the king.

It is at this point that Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem begin their first attack on Nehemiah.²¹ It starts in verse 19 with verbal accusations of **וַיִּלְעָנוּ**

²⁰ R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, eds., Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980). Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary, points out that in the using of this word, Nehemiah brings up connotations of punishment and the exiles caused by the disobedience of those who should have upheld the name of God amongst the nations.

²¹ Support for the person of Geshem as a real person living during the time of Nehemiah comes to light on three silver vessels dating back to the fifth

"And mocking them", "and despised them", accusing them of מרדים "revolting" against the king. This is the first of many attacks on Nehemiah and his plans to rebuild the city which characterize the first six chapters of this book. Chapter two concludes with Nehemiah's rebuke towards them.

Chapter III

Chapter three begins with a description of the beginning of the work to repair the walls of the city and to the topographical layout of both the city and the land. Much which takes place in the thirty-two verses of this chapter is a reiteration of the same material with the people and location to which they have been assigned to work being recorded. There are a few exceptions to this process which are worthy of investigation. First, there is no explanation in verse five for the lack of participation by the Nobels of Tekoites. Little is said of this in most commentaries, but Williamson speculates that the reason behind their lack of cooperation stems from their unwillingness to participate with the new governing body. Williamson also correctly points out that any returning exiles from Babylon were bound to have caused tension between themselves and those who had remained in the land.²² Another question raised in this chapter is the meaning of the word פֶּלֶךְ.²³ It may be true that

century B.C., one of which bears the name "Cain son of Geshem" for further reading see: F.M.C. Jr., "Geshem the Arabian, Enemy of Nehemiah," The Biblical Archaeologist 18, no. 2 (1955): 46-47.

²² Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary, 204.

²³ Harris, Archer, Waltke, Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-English Lexicon, (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979). Harris, Archer, Waltke as well as BDB assess the meaning as whirl of spindle, or district. Arron Deinsky, "Pelekh in Nehemiah 3," Israel Exploration Journal 33, no.3-4 (1983): 242-244. Deinsky argues that based on the Akkadian *pilku*, the meaning of פֶּלֶךְ should be rendered "word duty" rather than district.

this word may have been rendered as either work duty or district, however, given the context in which פֶּלֶךְ appears in the text of Nehemiah, it is unlikely that this word should be rendered "district". Therefore, the original reading of district shall prevail.²⁴

Two notes must be made on this chapter before moving on. First, it appears that the work which was being done to the city was being done simultaneously by all the members of the community. This seems evident by the swiftness by which the work was being completed. It also seems to have taken Sanballat by surprise leading us into the opening of chapter four. Secondly, there appears to be an effective sense of unity between each group as they work their own section of the wall. It was here too that Nehemiah shows his skill in leadership as he assigns to the task of repairing the wall those people who have a vested interest in that portion of the wall, whether it be to protect their homes or their places of business.

Chapter IV

Chapter four opens with the realization by Sanballat and company that Nehemiah might just accomplish the task he has set out to do (4:1). This is again met with Sanballat וילע (mocking the Jews). It appears from the text that this is being done before his brothers (or those taking his position), but also in front of those performing the work (4:2). Here the attack is once again verbal as Sanballat and Tobiah give words of ridicule. One such word being אמללים "feeble" this is the only occurrence of this word in the Old Testament and is used as an adjective to belittle the Jews.²⁵

²⁴ This is also briefly discussed in Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary Ibid., 206.

²⁵ Brown, Driver, Briggs as well as Harris, Archer, & Waltke.

Nehemiah responds with the first of many short prayers spoken in the NM during times of distress. It is interesting to note here that Nehemiah's first response to this verbal persecution is not one of physical hostility towards Sanballat, but rather prayer (4:4,5). This prayer takes on significant meaning as what Nehemiah is asking of God is not that their words be turned away from Nehemiah and company, but that what the taunters are declaring come back onto them. Verse six indicates that this encounter was successful for Nehemiah as it seemed to empower the builders to complete their task to half the walls original height (4:6).

This did not seem to detour Sanballat from his attempts to bring the work to a close. Moving from verbal attacks, he now plots to physically enter the city and attack those performing the work on the walls (4:8). Nehemiah takes protective measure against such an attack (4:9-20). Here Nehemiah in a continuation of the first person account, gives instructions for the defense of the city. Once again Nehemiah resorts to his short prayer as he is faced with another crisis (4:9). It may well be that the purpose of Sanballat's threats and plots are to demoralize the workers, as it seems unlikely that Sanballat would take military action against Nehemiah due to the fact that he has royal permission to reconstruct the city walls. This argument could be countered though as Sanballat claims he is acting on a former decree to stop the work of Ezra (Ez. 4:21-23).

As Nehemiah counters this threat, he does a couple of things which bring these people into defense readiness. First, he tells them to fight not for the city, but in defense of their families (4:14). It should be noted that these people were probably already assembled in family groups as this is how Nehemiah had them working to repair the walls. Secondly, Nehemiah sets the impending battle within the context of an ordained battle by declaring that

the Lord is great and terrible. This implies Nehemiah's confidence that the Lord would not let the enemy prevail. This attitude is justified in the next verse as "they heard" שמעו what was "known" נודע (Niphal third masculine singular) to Nehemiah and company that God had frustrated their plans, the work continued to completion.

Chapter four closes with a detailed explanation of how the work was continued while an adequate defense was maintained.

Chapter V

Up to this point we have seen the run down physical condition of the people living in the city. Now we are given an insight into their current economic conditions. Its important to note that the outcry which arises is not aimed at an outside foreign influence, but against their fellow Jews, היהודים אל־אחיהם (5:1). It appears that what is taking place in this chapter is a case of the Jewish wealthy taking advantage of the Jewish poor during these times of community restoration. Consequently, these people were falling into serious debt.

This may be due to the fact that as the people who are working on the wall take time away from their jobs and a steady source of income, they are unable to provide for their families while engaging in this restoration process. The text at this point seems to indicate that because of this, families are needing to put their sons and daughters into servitude to meet the physical food needs of the common Jewish family. Verses 2 through 4 indicate that there are three groups with similar concerns here.

Each group is distinguished by the introductory formula, ויש אשר אמרים "and there were those who said", stated at the start of each verse. The MT does not show verses 2-4 being a progressive stage between one common group of

people, but as three separate groups, each with their own concern. Group one appears to be families with no land of their own. These people depend on a wage for their daily living. Due to their extended time away from their daily duties, they seem to be coming under a time of economic hardship. In Jewish culture children were considered a gift from God, yet it seems that this first group of people are being forced into a position that they must sell their children into servitude just to meet their basic physical needs. The second group differs from the first by the fact that they own land, שְׂדֵהֵינוּ וְכַרְמֵינוּ וְבָהֵינוּ, each statement showing this possessive first common plural ending נוּ "our". This group finds themselves in a hard spot in that they do not need to sell their children into servanthood to make ends meet, having land which could be used as security during the difficult times, yet the giving up of that land for security may result in the eventual loss of that property. The problem which arises for this group is that once they have forfeited their land to a debt, debt-slavery became a real possibility. Group three are also land owners and appear to be better off than groups one or two, but foresee a time when they too will come under economic hardship due to the current restoration process.

Verse five appears to be a summarization of the needs of the three people groups just spoken of in the previous three chapters. Here the narrative lays out some of the specifics of their turmoil. We are told their fields were already beginning to be mortgaged. Furthermore, there appears to be some implications to misconduct taking place as daughters are singled out here and related to the Niphal participle נִכְשָׁה "sold into bondage" which is the same word used in Esther 7:8 and carries the connotations of rape.²⁶

²⁶ Harris, Archer, & Waltke, 430. Though Harris, Archer, & Waltke indicate that Neh. 5:5 refers to a forced servitude, the question must be raised as to why the daughters were separated out at this point. Though there is no

It needs to be pointed out at this point that the practices (outside of their misconduct toward their daughters) of indebted slavery was not contrary to the law. Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy all make provision for one to pay off or seek payment through this means. What appears to be the problem here is that the people holding the letters of debt are living by the law in the strictest sense. These were special times and required a special understanding of the law. Nehemiah acts swiftly when hearing of these misconducts.

Nehemiah's overriding concern here appears to be morality rather than legality. He gathers them together (The nobles and officials, *אֲדֹנָיִם וְאֲחֵיהֶם*, each being linked together with the direct object marker) and begins a long discourse concerning the condition of their fellow *בָּרָא* "brothers" (5:7).

Nehemiah's first charge against them is that they are extracting interest from their fellow brothers. Not that under normal circumstances this is wrong, but under these current conditions it is. Secondly, Nehemiah charges that not only have their Jewish brothers been sold into slavery to other nations and are just now being reassembled, but now they are being resold to one another, *אֲחֵיהֶם וְנַמְכְּרֵיהֶם* (5:8). Nehemiah's third charge is that of their religious faith claiming that they are bringing upon them the *חֶרֶף* (reproach) of the Gentiles by not walking in the fear of God (5:9).

Two insights are seen in verse ten. First there is a confirmation that Nehemiah is one of these wealthy families being spoken of as he admits to his own practice of lending money and grain to the poor. Secondly, Nehemiah seems to be indicating that he too has been involved to some extent in this unfair practice. His second response then is to call for them to "Forsake - this lending on interest" *וְעִזְבָה...הַמָּשָׂא*. This proposal takes two forms. First, to return

direct evidence for sexual misconduct in this passage, one is left wondering why the emphasis is placed on *בְּנֵה*.

to the original land owner that which was theirs (5:10) and secondly, after their property has been restored that their debt be cancelled in full with nothing required in return (5:11).

The assembly apparently accepts Nehemiah's proposal with a general statement, כֵּן נַעֲשֶׂה כְּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר, "Thus we will do as you say (5:12)." Nehemiah seals this commitment by calling the Priest to witness the taking of the oath and enactment of the curse ritual, with the people responding likewise.²⁷ This chapter ends with Nehemiah asking God to remember him and all that he has done for the good of the people. This prayer does not seem to be motivated out of a need for reconnection, but reflects a similar prayer found in chapter 13:22 where Nehemiah shows his understanding that favor and forgiveness are not items that can be bought from God, but flow out of his grace. Rather what Nehemiah is asking at the end of this chapter is that his works will stand as an example of self sacrifice to both God and the Jewish community.

Chapter VI

Chapter six opens once again with Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem attempting to stop the work of restoration. The process these men have used to bring this work to an end has escalated from verbal mockery (2:19), to verbally demeaning the workers (4:1-3), to the threat of open hostility (4:7-8, 11) and now they threaten assassination (6:1-2).

²⁷ This chapter closes out with the first real definitive statement that Nehemiah has been appointed governor of Judah. This section from verses 14-19 appears to be being spoken in a reflective mood. This reflection seems to be telling of Nehemiah's willingness to be self sacrificial and take on a greater personal burden than those who came before him or even than that which he asked of others. In the terms of leadership Nehemiah shows us that true leadership means being willing to give and go further in the acceptance of responsibility than those whom you ask to lead.

There is some discussion as to whether Tobiah should be included in verse one with Sanballat and Geshem. This debate arises concerning the lack of the preposition ל, though there is no firm evidence that Tobiah either should or should not be included or excluded from this list of names. The proposals for him being mentioned in verse one and not again in verse two include, 1) that he was added as a gloss by a scribe who was surprised to not find his name in the list, or 2) that by the mention of Sanballat and Geshem in verse two, verse one is meant to serve as an introductory verse to the chapter, while verse two points more to the specific action of Sanballat and Geshem. Though the evidence is quite equally balanced between these two possibilities, the latter seems the more plausible explanation.

This chapter can easily be broken into three distinct sections (6:1-9, 10-14, and 15-19). What is characteristic of each of these three sections is first, each one ends with the Piel of ירא (afraid) as the enemy tries to intimidate Nehemiah. Secondly, sections one and two seem to be closely linked together as Nehemiah's enemies actively try to make him afraid, the third section tells of the completion of the wall. Thirdly, there appears to be a differentiation between the enemies of Nehemiah in this chapter with Sanballat and Tobiah being mentioned as the prime foreign instigators of Nehemiah's troubles while section three reflects more on the internal conflict with the nobles of Judah as Tobiah's name is mentioned most likely because of his family connection to them.

Chapter six is the turning point in Nehemiah. It is in this chapter that the wall is completed. It has been the purpose of chapters 1-6 to describe the restoration of the city walls, and will be the goal of 7-13 to restore the people as a community of faith.

This chapter opens with the introductory clause which has been used throughout chapters 2-4, *ויהי כאשר נשמע*, "And it was when (so and so) heard". Here again, we see yet another conflict between Nehemiah and his adversaries. Some have tried to make the argument here that Sanballat was attempting to make an honest bargain with Nehemiah for reconciliation at the opening of this chapter.²⁸ Yet, this seems quite unlikely as three times throughout this chapter are Nehemiah's enemies said to be engaged in activity designed to frighten him. Furthermore, Williamson points out that had this been a real attempt to work things out with Nehemiah, Sanballat himself could have journeyed to Jerusalem after the first request in verse 2 was declined by Nehemiah. There also appears to be no hostility on Nehemiah's behalf towards Sanballat, yet, nowhere in this text does any of Nehemiah's enemies appear to have a change of heart towards Nehemiah. Given the textual evidence, we are presented with, it seems that Nehemiah had drawn the right conclusion concerning this trio's intentions.

Another factor for Nehemiah's refusal to leave his work at this point and engage in dialogue with these men may well stem from what we learn in verse 15, that the wall was completed. Given the fact that at the time of the requested meeting, Nehemiah's wall restoration was nearing completion, he may simply have been unwilling to leave the city at this critical point of the project.

This chapter is a declaration of completion amidst turmoil. As seen in the first half of this section (1-4), there was a failed attempt to lure Nehemiah out of the city. The second half of this section describes their attempt to stop the work based on unfounded rumor. The fact that Sanballat's messenger carried *ואגרת פתוחה בידו* "an open letter in his hand" is significant given that two types

²⁸ Williamson, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 253-254.

of letters could be sent by messenger (6:5). First was a sealed letter whose contents could not be reviewed, but in the presence of the one for whom it was meant. The second type of letter was an open letter. This letter was open for anyone to read that the messenger was inclined to show it to. The purpose of this attack seems to be to personally discredit Nehemiah by accusing him of setting himself up to claim power and revolt against the Persian kingdom once the walls have been made secure.

These claims seem to carry little weight in Nehemiah's eyes. Perhaps this is because the restoration process has the blessing of King Artaxerxes thus Nehemiah is secure in knowing that these rumors would be seen as unfounded in the eyes of the king. It appears from the way the text handles this second incident in this first section, Nehemiah deemed that nothing Sanballat had done or said could be substantiated, therefore, Nehemiah chose simply to verbally refute these charges and continue on with his work (6:8).

The second section of this chapter opens with Tobiah as the main instigator of trouble for Nehemiah (6:10). Tobiah appears to have many strong connections with the nobles of Judah being the son-in-law of Shecaniah. Tobiah's attempts on Nehemiah appear to follow the same line as those of Sanballat, that of bringing personal discreditation to Nehemiah. Though the reasoning for Nehemiah's visit to Shecaniah leaves us with some textually hard questions to ask, such as why did Nehemiah visit with Shemaiah the priest in the first place, this can only be answered by speculation. The purpose behind Tobiah's actions through Shemaiah appears to be solely to discredit Nehemiah in the eyes of the priest and the people.

The implication involved here is that Nehemiah should take refuge in the sanctuary area of the temple. This area was set aside for only the priest to enter by law. Thus Shemaiah's reasoning seems to be, "if you hide in there, no

one would ever think to look for you behind those doors." This would have played right into Tobiah's hand, but Nehemiah refuses this invitation on the basis that first, for a man in his position of leadership it was improper to flee (6:11), and Nehemiah realizes his position within the temple and the fact that as a lay person he is forbidden to enter that area of the temple else suffer death according to Numbers 18:7.²⁹ This appears to be reflected in his word choice at the end of verse 11, as he uses the interrogative pronoun to point to his ability to enter the temple and live (ומי...והי). Nehemiah appears to immediately recognize that this word could not have been from God, as God would never have instructed him to break the law.

The third and final section of this chapter opens with a major declaration, "והשלם החומה" and the wall was completed..." in fifty-two days (6:15). The speed at which this task was accomplished appears to have amazed those who had opposed it as they marvelled at the speed of the completion, recognizing that this work must have been done with the help of God.

Williamson points to some of the contributing factors which may have lead to some of the speed by which this project was completed, not least of which was Nehemiah's enthusiasm as a committed leader. Also, it should be remembered that not all the walls had been completely destroyed, thus, there were places that holes were being filled and not whole walls were being rebuilt. The relocation of the wall on the eastern side of the city had to have helped speed up the process. Finally, it needs to be noted that not all the work appears to have been of an exceptionally high quality.³⁰ The text now turns from the physical aspect of the city to the spiritual welfare of the people.

²⁹ Alfred L. Ivry, "Nehemiah 6, 10: Politics and the Temple," Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period 3 (1972): 35-45. Ivry gives further insight into the dynamics at work here in Nehemiah 6.

³⁰ K.M. Kenyon, Digging up Jerusalem.

Chapter VII

Restoration of the People

It seems that the opening verses of chapter seven are a continuation of the NM, yet, given the loss of the first person account at this point, seems to raise the question as to whether the text from verse 5b onward is a continuation of these memories.

Though the genealogical list presented in this chapter has significance for study it is deemed that it falls outside the realm of study in the context for which this theses' main concern lays. Therefore, we will begin with a short look at 7:1-5a then proceed on to chapter eight.

Verse one indicates that after the completion of the walls and the setting of the gates, the gatekeepers, the singers and the Levites had been appointed. Most scholars agree that the addition of the "the singers and the Levites" is most likely a scribal gloss due to the fact that these three classes are generally listed together.³¹ Others contend that because of the word order, which would tend to list Levites first, that this is a reflection of Nehemiah's concern of security and indicates that his word ordering reflects his placing of his trained guard at the gates rather than the laity of the city.

Nehemiah's next move is to appoint to roles of leadership two men whom he had confidence in because of their God fearing qualities (7:2). From here further provisions were made for the security of the city and Nehemiah prepares to read the census of the population. It appears that there is now much room or unoccupied space within the walls of the city. Therefore, it is

³¹ Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, Williamson, *Word Biblical Commentary*. Blenkinsopp even goes as far as to leave singers and Levites out of his translation.

likely that the reading of this census would establish who was eligible to move within the walls of the city.

Chapters VIII, IX, X

In the study of Nehemiah, these three chapters together lie at the center of debate concerning the literary and historical problems which are raised in the evaluation of Ezra/Nehemiah.

Since this present work focuses on Nehemiah and his leadership qualities, these three chapters will be dealt with as one unit. This is in no way meant to minimize their value in regards to either the historical or literary value of each chapter on its own, but rather to look at them in relationship to the body of literature which surrounds this unit traditionally known as the NM. Nor, by dealing with these three chapters as a unit is it a reflection of this authors belief that these chapters either do or do not belong to the NM.

It should be noted that the focus of this unit is on the acts of the people and Ezra the priest/scribe. Nehemiah is mentioned only twice throughout these three chapters (8:9; 10:1), and the first person account of Nehemiah is suspended until chapter 11, and could be argued until the end of 12:26. What makes this unit stand out from its surrounding material, outside of the loss of first person narrative, is the fact that it appears to have been inserted into the narrative, dividing Nehemiah's repopulation of Jerusalem. This repopulation started with the reading of the census in 7:1-5a and does not resume until 11:1.³² As we begin to assess this unit, it should be pointed out that chapter

³² This insertion of material has left a wide range of scholarly debate ranging from authors like Blenkinsopp who contend that this "large block of material 7:5b-10:40 [39] , none of which is from the NM, has been inserted at this point, modifying significantly the course of the narrative in the interest of a particular editorial point of view." p. 281, to authors such as Kaufmann who see these chapter settings within their correct historical setting,

eight needs to be seen as a unit within itself. This is seen as the text first gives the date after the reading in full, *ביום אחד לחדש השביעי*, "in the first day of the seventh month," (8:2) and this narrative proceeds in an unbroken continuation *וביום השני* "and on the second day" (8:13). Secondly, the text conveys a unity in theme, focusing on reading and explanation of the law and the people responding with a willingness to comply to its demands.

It can be seen from a reading of this text that the book of the Law of Moses must have been of substantial length and took a period of seven or eight hours to have read (8:3). The preceding verse also indicates to us that the reading of the law took place before all the people and not just a privileged few (8:2). The text also points out that this assembly had been planned and prepared for as the platform upon which Ezra stood had been specifically made for the reading of the word, *על-מגדל-עץ אשר צשו לדבר* (8:4).

Given the fact that the reading took so long, and such an exertion of energy by both the readers and the listeners alike would have been great, it appears from the break in the listing of those who stood with Ezra (v. 5-6) that there was a built in break of the reading. Also verse eight indicates a clear progression of reading and teaching *וַיִּקְרָא בַסֵּפֶר בְּחֹרֶת* "and read aloud from the book of law," *מִפֶּרֶשׁ וּשְׁוֹם שָׁכַל וַיְבִינֵנוּ בַמִּקְרָא*, "and made it distinct and put good sense into it and they understood the reading." This process of reading and teaching would have given both the listeners and readers adequate time to rest as well

Yehezkel Kaufmann, *History of the Religion of Israel, Vol.4* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1977): appendix vii 638-49. This debate holds many views ranging between these two views, such as those who want to maintain chapters 8-9, but to place them after Ezra 8, putting chapter 10 after Nehemiah 13; others would keep 9-10 together without reference to chapter 8; and still others who would argue that these three chapters arose out of tradition independent of either Ezra or Nehemiah.

as to have allowed for complete understanding of the material that was being brought before them.

It is indicated that in the second day of this reading only the heads of the families gathered (8:13). It also appears that the purpose of this gathering was to *וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל אֶל־דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה* "and to contemplate the word of the Law." Most commentators at this point render the verb, *שָׁכַל*, as study. This point could be argued though as both BDB and Harris, Archer, and Waltke give the word a different meaning. BDB indicates that used as a Hipil Infinitive Construct verb, it implies the meaning of "to give attention to, consider, ponder."³³ Harris, Archer, and Waltke point out that this word occurs seventy-four times and all but twice in the Hipil form. The meaning associated with this work, "relates to an intelligent knowledge of the reason."³⁴ They go on to say that this verb indicates a process of thinking through a complex arrangement of thoughts resulting in a wise dealing and use of good practical common sense.³⁵ Thus, this verb indicates a paying attention to, gaining comprehension, or insight. Though all these terms involve study to some extent, the verb seems to be carrying a stronger more forceful meaning at this point.

It is at this level the people seem to have gained some new insight or comprehension that was not there previous to this careful pondering of the text for we learn that they, *וַיִּמְצְאוּ כְתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה*, "found written in the Torah (8:14)." It is hard to believe that this new insight was unknown to some of them, but the text here seems to indicate that what they now read made sense to them, their contemplation of the law gave way to a new understanding of

³³ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 968.

³⁴ Harris, Archer, & Waltke, 877.

³⁵ Ibid.

the law in light of their present circumstance, and as a result they acted upon their new found insight.

It is here that it can be pointed out that the people moved quite promptly to fulfill that which they had found in the text, precisely the construction and living in booths for the prescribed seven days (8:16). It should be noted here that this was a festival designed to reenact the wandering and desert life of those who went through the exodus. On a more speculative and hermanutical note this may well have been a symbolic gesture reflecting on their own present circumstance. This could well have symbolized the deportation and exile from Jerusalem representing their desert life without a home (Jerusalem and a Jewish nation). This also may reflect the first stage in Nehemiah's restoration of the people, mainly causing them to remember where they have been in their disobedience to God by the loss of their city and nation, but also God's faithfulness as he begins to bring restoration back to them through both the rebuilding of their city and the bringing them back together as a people.

Williamson points out that in this chapter Ezra addresses the primary problem of the people at this time, mainly how can a people who are now a province under the Persian Empire, still observe their own laws and practices which were so much a part of who they were as a people?³⁶ This could be accomplished by realizing that the hermeneutical principles of the law could still be continued and were important for an understanding of who they were

³⁶ This proved to be a difficult task as they often seemed to arouse anti - Jewish feelings as can be seen in documents coming out of Egypt at this same time period. A. Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), xv-xvii.

as a nation.³⁷ Nehemiah had restored the city, and in some ways that was the easy part, now the restoration of the people had begun.

The next step in the rebuilding phase was to bring the nation together as a unified people. In part this was done through the separation of the Jews from the foreigners who were living among them as they came (Though this verse may also relate to Ezra's concern for mixed marriages.) together to read from the book of the law for a quarter of the day and spent another quarter day in worship (9:3).

The prayer found in chapter nine does several things in this unification process. First, by the author taking the focus off of Nehemiah and Ezra and placing it upon the Levites, it points to the solidarity of the people as well as acknowledges their responsibility before God as the people of God. Secondly, this prayer also points out the corporate nature of these people with both the blessings and failures of the previous generations. Thus, these people are now not only identified with their present situation, but their past also. This goes further to imply that their present action will directly reflect this communities' future.³⁸

Chapter ten is the climax of this unit as the people come to full שכל "contemplation" (8:8) of what it means to be the people of God. Here again neither Nehemiah nor Ezra are the focus of this chapter, but the people's response to the reading of the law.³⁹ The main focus of chapter ten is the

³⁷ Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary, 298.

³⁸ H. G. M. Williamson, "Laments at the Destroyed Temple," Bible Review, (1990): 12-17, 44. Williamson sees this prayer being that of the people who remained behind during the exile and not originally that of those who returned. He contends that this prayer has been added by redactors at a later time.

³⁹ Once again as this chapter gives a substantial list of names, which receive quite a lot of attention from the commentators, it is by no means the intent of this work to minimize the importance of these names by passing over

people's public acknowledgment and commitment to the law and certain specific aspects of the law.⁴⁰

When examining these three chapters as one unit, chapter ten falls into place as a natural conclusion to this unit. The focus of this section is two fold. First, it serves to emphasize the fact that this renewal takes place within the full community and that each individual was responsible to give his/her own personal pledge to this renewed understanding of commitment to the law. Secondly, it is the intent of this climatic chapter to emphasize the fact that not only are these people to realize and confess their faith (8-9) but they are to act upon this faith as well. It is the intent of chapter ten to further the cultic understanding of the Jewish religion which requires the people to respond by affirming their faith in present and future action.

Chapter XI-XII

Chapter eleven and twelve once again begin the first person narrative of the NM. This chapter also continues the repopulation narrative which was interrupted in chapter seven.⁴¹ This chapter opens with the introductory verses one and two.⁴² The purpose of this chapter is to determine who shall

them, rather in light of the study of Nehemiah's leadership qualities this will be left for future study.

⁴⁰Further study on the exegetical meaning of Nehemiah 10 can be found in David J. A. Clines, "Nehemiah 10 as an Example of Early Jewish Biblical Exegesis," Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 21 (1981): 111-117.

⁴¹ Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary, 341. As this is a continuation of the listing of names associated with the list from chapter seven, this list will be treated as it was in chapter seven and ten. For further study on the use of genealogical lists, see J. R. Bartlett, "Zadok and His Successors at Jerusalem," The Journal of Theological Studies 19 (1968): 1-18. And Marshall D. Johnson, The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 37-44.

⁴² There is considerable debate as to whether this is a continuation of the NM at this point or the work of someone else. For further reading on this debate, see Williamson, Word Biblical Commentary, 344-350.

repopulate the city. It appears that only about ten percent of the people would be allowed to actually move within the walls of the city. Who they were would be decided by the casting of lots (11:1). This was an acceptable means for determining matters of importance, as it has been used throughout the Old Testament with the belief that it revealed the divine will of God (cf. Numbers 26:55; Joshua 7:14, 16:18, 14:2, 18:6,8; 1 Samuel 10:20-21, 14:41-42; Proverbs 16:33). This genealogical listing of people and priests concludes in chapter 12:26.

Chapter twelve continues with the dedication of the wall. It is interesting that though commentators argue over the place of Nehemiah 8-10 and to some extent 11-12:26, as an interruption to the flow of the NM that in the hermanutical scheme of the the text these chapters seem to fall right into place with the overriding concern of writer of this book. It should be remembered that Nehemiah's first move was to secure the city walls, to provide a place of safety for the people. It seemed unusual that after this was done, the city was not immediately dedicated. Yet, here the concern does not seem to be for the restoration of a physical structure, but the restoration of the people. In this light, chapters 9-12:26 with emphasis on 10:28-39 which contains the concluding remarks, *וְלֹא נִעְזֹב אֶת־בֵּית אֱלֹהֵינוּ* (10:39), "and we will not forsake the house of our God." indicates writer's concern for the people to have been consecrated and made right and whole before the city was dedicated to their use. In light of this, the dedication of the city in the second half of chapter twelve takes place at its properly appointed time. This argument if explored further could challenge presently held theories that Nehemiah 8-10 and possibly 11-12:26 was the work of later redactors or that of the Chronicler.

The dedication process begins in verse 12:30 with the priest and Levites purifying themselves, the people, the gates, and the walls. This purification

process of the persons involved in this type of cultic ritual was proper in light of Exodus 19:10, 14-15; Leviticus 16:28; Numbers 8:5-8, yet the process of purifying the gates and walls of the city may have, as Williamson suggests, been in acknowledgement of the sanctity of Jerusalem, "The Holy City (11:1)," in reflection of being defiled by Gentile incursion, and in memory of those who in the past died upon the walls while in defence of the city.⁴³

As the dedication process begins, Nehemiah follows the leaders giving thanks upon the wall (12:38).⁴⁴ While broken into two groups, the liturgical nature of this event is highlighted in the cultic ritual which takes place as the two companies proceed around the city to meet again at the Gate of the Guard to give sacrifice which is a time of great joy for all the people of the city.

Chapter XIII

This chapter is an account of some possible back sliding by the Jewish people in the area of the cultic practice, tithing, in their recognition of the Sabbath, and marriage to foreigners. It appears that Nehemiah was not yet through with either Tobiah nor Sanballat (13:7). The text indicates that it is Sanballat's son-in-law, the priest Eliashib, who helped Tobiah further his position within the city. The fact that Nehemiah finds him occupying one of the rooms in the temple suggests that they did not expect to see Nehemiah back in the city. The question raised here is, why were there empty rooms in the temple that Tobiah could occupy? It appears that for some reason tithes were not being received and for this reason there may have been room for Tobiah, the question raised was why were these tithes not being raised? It is evident

⁴³ Ibid., 373.

⁴⁴ For a discussion on the use of the word *todot* (Thanksgiving) as it is used in this chapter see Leiden E. J. Brill, "The use of *TODOT* in Nehemiah XII," *Vetus Testamentum* 64, no. 3 (1994): 387-393.

here that the Levites who own no land and are dependent on the tithes of the people have left the city. Nehemiah's first move here is to reinstate the Levites then see that the officials adhere to their obligation to see that tithes are collected (13:10-13). At this point Nehemiah brings them into direct remembrance with 10:39 and the oath they took not to neglect the house of God. In this first half of chapter 13, Nehemiah reminds the people that it requires the whole hearted participation in the life of the cult to maintain the vitality of its life.

It is apparent in these verses (4-14) that when variations from the normal routine happen, it throws the whole out of balance. In this case, a decrease in offering resulted in the ceasing of normal temple duties (10-11) and caused those forces who have been determined to see that normal Jewish cultic practices not be reestablished to begin to reestablish themselves.

Concerning the issue of the Sabbath and marriage to foreigners the next two issues are addressed using the formula *בִּימֵינוּ*, "In those days." This suggests that these last two sections are based more on theme rather than chronology. It is noted that after the formal introduction of each section, the phrase *וַיֵּרָא*, "I saw", further points to Nehemiah's first hand involvement with the correction of the wrongs he sees taking place. He immediately moved to deal with those whom he identifies as the ones inciting the problem.

Thus it is the intent of this chapter to show that by the end of the NM he had established to "the place of his father's sepulchers" (2:3) not only a restored city, but a restored people and cultic practice.

Chapter 4

Current Models of Leadership

Leadership defined

As one begins to read the book of Nehemiah, it quickly becomes evident that this book focuses on many different aspects, primary of which are Nehemiah's Godly character and that of his leadership abilities. Leadership is a term which invokes in many the simple understanding of one person or group directing another person or group toward either a desired or undesired goal. What makes a person either a good or bad leader has been the topic of many informal conversations at social gatherings throughout the centuries as well as in depth scientific studies which have developed many widely used and debated theories concerning leadership.

The first place to start when looking into the study of leadership is to examine some of the definitions of leadership which have emerged out of these studies. This term has a wide range of definitions, many of which are listed by Fiedler.¹

Leadership is the exercise of authority and the making of decisions.

Leadership is the initiation of acts which result in a consistent pattern of group interaction directed toward the solution of a mutual problem.

Leadership is an ability to persuade or direct men without use of the prestige or power of formal office or external circumstance.

The leader is one who succeeds in getting others to follow him.

The leader is the person who creates the most effective change in group performance.

¹ Fred E. Fiedler, A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness (New York: McGraw Hill, 1967). For a full citation concerning each of the definitions see Fiedler, pages 7-8.

The leader is one who initiates and facilitates member interaction.

Leadership is the process of influencing group activities toward goal setting and goal achievement.

The leader is that person identified and accepted as such by his followers.

Leadership may be defined as the use of power to promote the goal accomplishment and maintenance of the group.²

Leadership shares all of the features of human communication. First, leaders use symbols to create reality. Leaders use language, stories and rituals to create distinctive group cultures. Second, leaders communicate about the past, present and future. They engage in evaluation, analysis and goal setting. Effective leaders create a desirable vision for followers outlining what the group should be like in the future. Third, leaders make conscious use of symbols to reach their goal.³

Leadership is human (symbolic) communication which modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet group goals and needs.⁴

As is evident from this small sampling of definitions relating to leadership, there is no one set or agreed upon definition for the term leader, or leadership. For the purpose of this study, leadership will be defined as, one's ability to assess the current situation and needs of a person or group, in order to gain compliance from that person or group to meet the current needs of that person or group through the stipulations set forth by the leader.

Just as there are a wide range of definitions for what makes a leader, so too is the definition of what constitutes a group. Fiedler lists a couple of different definitions of groups that would be helpful for us here as we derive our own definition.

² David W. Johnson & Frank P. Johnson, Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), 203-204.

³ Michael Z. Hackman and Craig E. Johnson, Leadership: A Communication Perspective (Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press, 1991), 7-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

By this term we generally mean a set of individuals who share a common fate, that is, who are interdependent in the sense that an event which affects one member is likely to affect all.⁵

A group does not merely mean individuals characterized by some similar property. Thus, for example, a collection of Republicans or farmers or Negroes or blind men is not a group. These collections may be called classes of people. The term group, on the other hand, refers to two or more people who bear an explicit psychological relationship to one another. This means that for each member of the group the other members must exist in some more or less immediate psychological way so that their behavior and their characteristics influence him.⁶

In light of these definitions and our current study of Nehemiah, group will be defined as: group of people who are independently bound together by their cultural heritage, and present economic and social condition, enacting behavior within their setting which ultimately affects the group as a whole.

In the field of group leadership studies, those theories which have taken dominance and have received much notoriety and use have been 1) trait theory, which claims that there are certain traits or qualities that a person must have in order to become a leader. This theory contends that "Good leaders are not born, they are trained."⁷ 2) Function theory which states that there are certain roles that must be carried out if a group is to be successful. Thus, anytime a person performs one of these roles, they are in effect the leader for the period of time.⁸ 3) The three-dimensional theory (also known as the stylistic approach) looks at what leaders do and contends that there are three different types of leaders: the authoritarian leader, the democratic leader, and the laissez-faire leader.⁹ 4) The situational theory of leadership which is

⁵ Fiedler, 6-7.

⁶ Ibid.,

⁷ Cheryl Hamilton and Cordell Parker, Communicating for Results (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing, 1990), 297-98.

⁸ Ibid., 298.

⁹ Ibid., 299.

closely related to the three -dimensional theory, by claiming that a leader will use either the authoritarian, democratic, or laissez-faire approach depending on the situation in which he or she finds himself or herself.¹⁰ 5) Falling within the theories classified as situational is Fred Fiedler's contingency model of leadership, this model contends that the effectiveness of a leader in a given situation is influenced by three primary factors. These factors in turn control the amount of influence a leader has over the group. These factors are: 1) the leader's position of power; 2) the task structure; and 3) the interpersonal relationship between the leader and the group.¹¹ Although this list of models of leadership is not nearly complete, it does give a fairly good summary of some of the most prominent theories of leadership currently being used in the field of communication studies.

Another more recent addition to the study of leadership and group dynamics is the cultural studies of organization also known as ethnography. This field of studies examines how groups or organizations form their own cultures within themselves. These groups or organizations tend to form within themselves, their own esoteric language, rituals, rites, and artifacts which have meaning within that group and organization. Thus, through the study of a culture's actions, practices, narratives, and dialogue, we can come to see the primary values that culture holds.¹²

As it would be quite impossible to look at Nehemiah within the context of all these theories (all of which could hold some relevance to the study of Nehemiah the leader), three will be selected from this list for further

¹⁰ Ibid., 301.

¹¹ Hackman & Johnson, 47.

¹² Eric M. Eisenberg and H.L. Goodall, Jr., Organizational Communication: Balancing Creativity and Constraint (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 115-154.

discussion and explanation. In looking at the theories summarized on the previous pages, the trait theory tends to be too speculative in how it would lend itself to the study of Nehemiah. This theory would ask us to provide information that is not available in the book of Nehemiah such as any training he may have received which would allow him to assume the role of leader. Likewise, the function theory tends to see everyone as assuming the role of leader as the need arises. This is clearly not the case in the book of Nehemiah. Though others assume a leadership role, i.e. Ezra in 8:1f, this assuming of the leadership role falls within the accepted duties of Ezra a priest. Therefore, this work will proceed to further expound on the three-dimensional theory, Fiedler's situational approach, and the cultural studies of organizations.

Theories of leadership

The Three-dimensional Approach

The three-dimensional approach with its terms, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire is not by any means a new concept in the study of leadership. In fact this theory arises out of earlier studies which pertained to different leaders active during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Emory Bogardus paints this picture of autocratic leaders when he states that this type of leader is, 1) a person who rules with a club and leads in terms of his/her own wishes molding the action of others to suit his/her own plans; 2) uses dominating methods in attaining a goal of dominance, 3) they consider themselves justified in their dominance either on the grounds of their own superiority through birth, experience, or the situation refers it; 4) exercises

great freedom, acting as a law unto themselves; 5) requires a hero-worship public; 6) is careless of human feelings; and 6) will seek power at any cost.¹³

He goes on to state that the democratic leader is one who: 1) grows out of the needs of the group; 2) draws people up to their best levels of performance rather than driving them forward with the leader's own purpose; 3) ministers to others; 4) suggests rather than orders; 5) depends on personal contacts; and 6) needs an educated staff. ¹⁴

These two styles determined the categories under which most leaders were categorized for many years. In the 1930's, Kurt Levin, Ralph White, and Ronald Lippett began their studies at the University of Iowa into the psychological semantics of democratic, autocratic, and unorganized social situations. It was from these studies which arose the three-dimensional theory of leadership. Concerning how they came to this process of role identification, White states,

Early in our discussion of these leadership roles, we, the experimenters, found ourselves naming these roles rather than calling them "role one," "role two," and "role three." The names that seemed natural and appropriate to us were "autocratic," "democratic," and laissez-faire."¹⁵

The emphasis in this theory of leadership is that leaders will adopt one of the these three styles of communication and as a result interact with their followers very differently. When examining these three styles, it is found that the authoritarian leader determines policy, procedures, behavior, tasks, and roles. They create distance between themselves and their followers by emphasizing role distinctions, make personal praise or criticism of individual

¹³ Emory S. Bogardus, Leaders and Leadership (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), 20-21.

¹⁴ Ibid., 22.

¹⁵ Ralph K. White and Ronald Lippitt, Autocracy and Democracy: An Experimental Inquiry (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 10.

contributions, and believe that followers would be unable to function effectively on their own without direct supervision. Finally, left to themselves, people would be unable to complete a task and would be unproductive in the work force.¹⁶

Standing over against the autocratic style is the democratic style of leadership. The democratic leader operates to the opposite of the autocratic style in that this type of leader will engage in supportive communication and will interact with the followers, will suggest alternatives to the group, yet allows the group to decide specific policies, procedures, and tasks or roles of group members. Group discussion is encouraged. Leaders will not be intimidated by group discussions. Believes that everyone is free to participate in appraisal of group efforts.¹⁷

The final dimension of this theory is that of the laissez-faire leader. This word is a French word roughly meaning, "leave them alone." This style is characterized by a high degree of autonomy and self-rule. Here the leader does nothing but supply information and material to the group when asked. This leader does not directly participate in decision making unless it is requested for by the group, nor does he/she take part or direct group decisions. This leader gives the group complete freedom to determine policy, procedures, tasks and roles pertaining to the group.¹⁸

¹⁶ Hackman & Johnson, 22-23. Hamilton & Parker, 299.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Studies which have been done on groups which exhibit one of these three styles tend to elicit these responses from those who participated.¹⁹

1. Laissez-faire and democratic leadership communication styles are not the same. Groups with laissez-faire leaders are not as productive and satisfying as groups with democratic leaders.
2. Although groups headed by authoritarian leaders are often most efficient, democratic leaders also achieve high efficiency. The greatest number of tasks were completed under authoritarian leadership. This productivity was dependent on the leader's direct supervision.
3. Groups with authoritarian leadership experience more hostility and aggression than groups with democratic or laissez-faire leaders.
4. Authoritarian led groups may experience discontent that is not evident on the surface. Even in authoritarian led groups with high levels of productivity and little evidence of hostility and aggression, absenteeism and turnover were greater than in democratic and laissez-faire groups.
5. Followers exhibit more dependence and less individuality under authoritarian leaders.
6. Followers exhibit more commitment and cohesiveness under democratic leaders.

Thus the behaviors generally associated with the three-dimensional theory of leadership can be summarized as in Table 4.1.²⁰

¹⁹ Hackman & Johnson, 24-25.

²⁰ Ibid., 23-24.

TABLE 4.1

Authoritarian	Democratic	Laissez-Faire
Set goals individually	Involves followers in goal setting	Allow followers free rein to set their own goals
Control discussion with followers	Facilitate discussion with followers	Avoid discussion with followers
Set policy and procedures unilaterally	Solicit input regarding the determination of policy and procedures	Allow followers to set policy and procedures
Dominate interaction	Focus interaction	Avoid interaction
Personally directs the completion of task	Provide suggestions and alternatives for the completion of the task	Provide suggestions and alternatives for the completion of the task only when asked to do so by the followers
Provide infrequent positive feedback	Provide frequent positive feedback	Provide infrequent feedback of any kind
Exhibits poor listening skills	Exhibits effective listening skills	May exhibit either poor or effective listening skills
Uses conflict for personal gain	Mediate conflict for personal gain	Avoid conflict

Further findings suggest that leaders who adhere to an authoritative style can expect high productivity, increased hostility, aggression, and discontentment while at the same time experiencing a decreased commitment, independence and creativity within the group. Routinized, structured, or simple tasks which require specific compliance are often best obtained by an authoritative leader. This style tends to see quick results.

Democratic leaders can expect high productivity, satisfaction, commitment, and cohesiveness. This leader is best suited for tasks which require participation, involvement, creativity, and commitment to group decisions. This style tends to get bogged down in the greater groups needs.

The laissez-faire style, often accused of leadership avoidance, tends to be characterized by a decrease in productivity, less group satisfaction, are less innovative, often do not require direct guidance, and often can produce better results if members are motivated, knowledgeable experts.

It should be emphasized at this point before we leave the three dimensional theory of leadership that this theory sees people operating from an either/or leadership style and do not see leaders crossing boundaries between styles. As a result those who operate from one of these styles will produce only the resulting group behavior out of the perimeters from which their style of leadership functions. The effects that these styles can have on group behavior is summarized here in table 4.2.²¹

²¹ Ibid., 26. For a more detailed listing of the studies which produced these results see page 36.

TABLE 4.2

Authoritarian Leadership	Democratic Leadership	Laissez-faire Leadership
Increases productivity	Lowers turnover and absenteeism rates	Decreases innovation
Produces more accurate solutions when leader is knowledgeable	Increases follower satisfaction	Decreases follower motivation and satisfaction
More positively accepted in larger groups	Increases follower participation	Increases productivity and satisfaction for highly motivated experts
Enhances performance on simple task, decreases performances on complex task	Increases follower commitment to decisions	Decreases quality and quantity of output
Increases aggression level among followers	Increases innovation	
Increases turnover rates		

The situation theory of leadership

Linked closely to the three dimensional theory is the situational theory of leadership. The basic premise of this theory is that a good leader will modify and change their style (autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire) as needed. This requires of the leader the ability to evaluate and decide which style would best function at a particular time and in a particular setting and situation. This process involves realizing which style theory they are most comfortable with, the particular situation they are presently facing, the needs and expectations of the group, and the desired goals of the group. The primary belief

functioning behind this theory is,"no one type of organizational structure or leadership style is most appropriate for all situations."²²

Of the theories which fall under the label of situational theory of leadership. Fred Fiedler's contingency theory is one of the best known models.²³ Fiedler found in his research that "which management style will be the most effective in a particular situation depends to the degree to which the group situation enables the manager (leader) to exert influence."²⁴ This was based on two distinguished factors based on whether the person was task-oriented or relationship-oriented. Fiedler found that leaders who were more task-oriented tended to be more directive, controlling, and less concerned with human relations. Those who were found to be relationship-oriented were seen as more permissive, considerate of others feelings, and concerned with good human relations.²⁵ Therefore, leadership in any given situation depends on these three elements, 1)the power of the leader; 2)the structure and nature of the task; 3)the interpersonal relationship between the leader and the group.²⁶

In examining these three points, Fiedler found that a leader's position of power within the group depends upon his/her position within the group.

²² Hamilton & Parker, 59.

²³ Fiedler, *ibid.* A listing of scales and measurements devised for testing this theory are also given in Fred E. Fielder, Martin M. Chemers, and Linda Mahar, Improving Leadership Effectiveness (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976). For further discussion on situational theory as tested in the field see Robert P. Vecchio, "Situational Leadership: An Examination of a Prescriptive Theory," Journal of Applied Psychology 72, no. 3 (1987): 444-451. Also, Theodore E. Zorn and Gregory B. Leichty, "Leadership and Identity: A Reinterpretation of Situational Leadership Theory," The Southern Communication Journal 57, no. 1 (1991): 11-14.

²⁴ Hamilton & Parker, 59.

²⁵ Erwin P. Hollander, Leadership Dynamics: A Practical Guide to Effective Leadership (New York: The Free Press, 1978).

²⁶ Hackmann & Johnson, 47. Hamilton & Parker, 301.

Positions which allow the leader freedom to reward or punish provide the leader with substantial positional power. Concerning task structure, some tasks are highly structured, while others have little structure to them at all. Those tasks which can be considered as highly structured will be seen as easier to evaluate by both leader and group as well as each will recognize up front the agreed upon outcome. Those tasks which are seen as highly unstructured will be harder to evaluate and develop more tension within the group. Leader-member relationships will either foster loyalty, affection, trust, and respect between the group and leader or a sense of hostility which leads to lower motivation and commitment between leader and group.²⁷

Three other variables which determine which style of leadership a leader may need to employ would be: 1) the time which is allowed to reach a decision; 2) the time required to get the group to commit to a project; and 3) the time it will take to implement the task.

A leaders effectiveness will greatly depend on his/her ability to gain compliance from the group. Thus, a good leader will consider these four variables when planning the task. 1) Goal clarity. Here the first step in group compliance is to lay out and clearly define the objectives and assignments of the group. The goal of cooperation lays in a well defined objective which leaves little ambiguity among group members. 2) Goal-path multiplicity. This relates to the methods which will be employed by the group to achieve the desired goal. 3) Solution specificity. This relates to how many different outcomes are acceptable to the finished task. Is there only one acceptable outcome or a number of options available to the group. Unspecified outcomes tend to create uncertainty concerning how to define the task and how it

²⁷ Hackman & Johnson, 46-49.

should be judged. 4) Decision verifiability. It is important that a task is verifiable from time to time so group members can know if they are on the right track. Thus periodic checks should be built in order to assure that everything is moving along according to schedule. This also allows the leader to determine progress while at the same time giving the leader control over both the task and the group.²⁸

A leader's effectiveness will greatly depend on his or her ability to determine which style of leadership best fits the present situation. Their ability to do this will affect group performance and output, its moral, and the satisfaction of group members.

A wise and competent leader knows the situation that they must lead a group through. Those who lack situational insight often find themselves troubled by leadership unevenness and lack of group compliance. Situational insight is important as a leader may use techniques in a given situation, which arise out of the use of a wrong leadership style, which will either not produce the intended or fail completely.²⁹

In summary the contingency model of the situational theory recognizes that each task may require that a leader move from one style of leadership to another depending on the task and the conditions which are either inherent or rise out to the implementation of a task toward its desired goal. Hamilton and Parker summarize the effectiveness of these three styles as:³⁰

²⁸ Fred E. Fielder and Joseph E. Garcia, New Approaches to Effective Leadership: Cognitive Resources and Organizational Performances (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1987), 57.

²⁹ Bogardus, 271.

³⁰ Hamilton and Parker, 302. It needs to be noted that Hamilton and Parker only list the authoritative and democratic styles and neglect to deal with the laissez-faire style.

Authoritarian leadership styles work best when

- *group agreement is not required for implementation
- *a group is very large
- *time for a decision is short, and
- *tasks are fairly simple.

Democratic leadership is suggested when

- *greater employee satisfaction is needed
- *group commitment is needed for implementation
- *tasks are complicated and require lengthy discussion
- *increased productivity is needed, and
- *reduced resistance to change is sought

The Laissez-faire is suggested when

- *there is a highly trained group
- *group members are highly motivated
- *there are those who can perform leadership roles when needed
- *quality and results are stressed over timeliness of outcome.

Cultural Studies of Organizations

It has long been recognized that cultures develop their own esoteric means of functioning. This has been the purpose for the study of anthropology, to discover how each culture functioned, what were its rites and rituals, what symbols were an integral part of life within that culture, what were its overriding values, etc. Over the last few decades, communication researchers have come to realize that organizations create cultures within themselves, and what is communicated in these cultures will tell a lot about that group.³¹

³¹ Cultural studies also labeled as ethnography is the study of anthropology that deals specifically with cultures. It is not the intent of this section to move away from the present summary of specific theories of communication at this point, but to explore how the discipline of communication studies has begun to employ the principles of ethnography into its field. Therefore, this will be a short examination of this branch of study from a communication perspective rather than an anthropological one. For further reading on how this field of research is being utilized in areas of

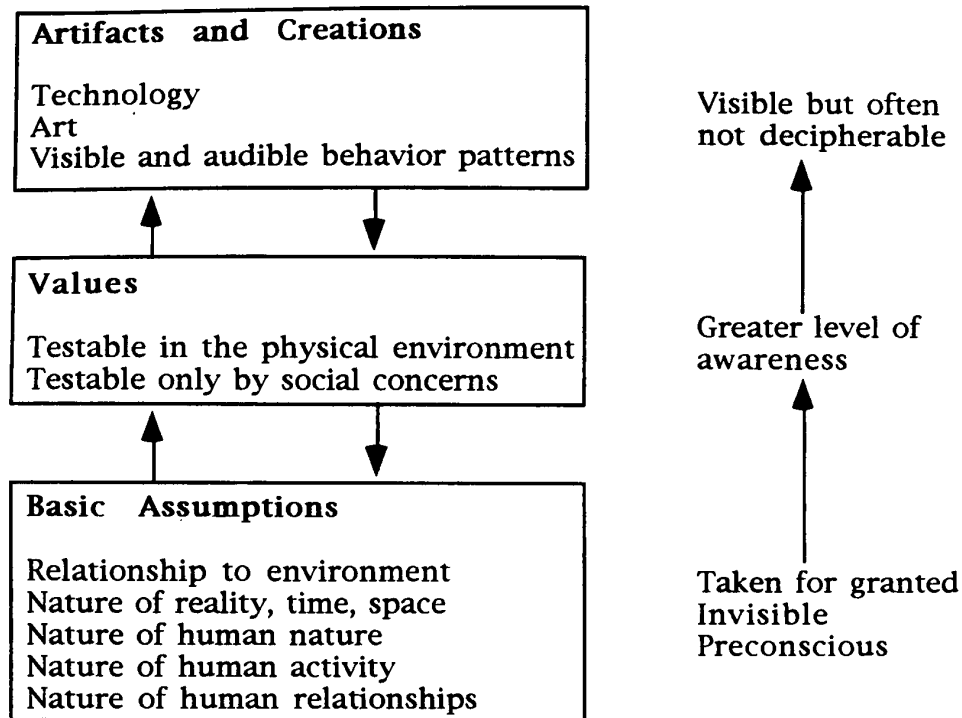
Cultures derive out of the meaningful ordering of persons and things. Here meaningful order refers to the process by which events and relationships are revealed through cultural symbols, and persons are the means by which those symbols are given meaning. As has been noticed by anthropologists, most cultures develop out of a religious context. What is significant about this is that culture then defines what beliefs are important within that setting. It is important to realize that within a culture not all its members will accept the belief or practices in the same way. Thus, most cultures will include different sects, sharing the same heritage, but understanding and carrying out their beliefs differently.

Culture derives its meaning from three levels. 1) Artifacts, which include those things which the culture produces; 2) its values, by which it judges itself; and 3) its basic assumptions, those perceptions by which it holds as the bases of reality. The diagram in table 4.3 indicates the levels of culture and their interaction.³²

communication studies, see Dwight Conquergood, "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics," Communication Monographs 58 (1991): 179-194.

³² Edgar H. Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985), 14.

TABLE 4.3



Each culture has working within each of these levels a complex system of symbols. These symbols take on meaning within the context of that culture and include group members' actions, practices, narratives, and dialogue. Therefore, the study of cultural organization is to study its symbols as well as its use of symbols.³³

Communication theorist Kenneth Burke describes the four means by which humans engage in symbol usage: First, our conceptions of how everything is formed stems from our ability to use language. Therefore, language is the organized locus of human symbolic experience; language therefore creates organizations as well as our understanding of them. Second,

³³ Eisenberg, 117.

to understand organizations as symbolic constructions is to recover a perspective on the human being as a symbol-using, symbol-abusing beings. Symbols don't simply stand for something else. Rather, they shape our understandings of what something else is, what it means, what it can be used for, and how it should be dealt with. Third, symbol-using/abusing is an inherently human activity. Fourth, to view culture as a symbolic construction is to understand symbols in organizations as the material manifestations of culture. As such, symbol-using provides a unique perspective on what it means to be a human and what it means to be a human situated among other humans at work.³⁴

This understanding of symbol usage is further expanded on by Thomas Dandridge who sees organizational symbols serving these functions: First, symbols are descriptive. They answer questions concerning the nature of a culture. Second, symbols are energy controlling. They function to channel, increase, or decrease organizational energies. Thirdly, they provide system maintenance. Often symbols create a sense of order and stability within a group.³⁵

The cultural approach to communication studies seeks to describe the unique sense of place which is provided by the physical and symbolic relationships operating among the person, work, and things. Thus, ethnography determines to find in the symbols, language, rituals, ceremonies, and human relationships the meaning a group has for itself.³⁶

This takes place in a couple of different ways, in culture as action and practice; and in culture as narrative and dialogue. Our action is an

³⁴ Ibid., 117-118.

³⁵ Hackman & Johnson, 143-144.

³⁶ Eisenberg, 136.

interpretation of a situation and it provides a group member with an understanding of his or her place in that organization as well as giving meaning to it. Thus, it is important to realize that the actions and practices that organization members use to construct cultures are always diverse, and their interests, values, and meanings are seldom widely shared. As a result, it is instructive to consider culture as a collectivity of actions and practices enacted by smaller groups, subcultures and counter cultures in which all are engaged in a constant dialogue. The tensions among these competing interests help reveal and establish boundaries within group subcultures as well as actively construct the dialogic dynamics of the overall culture. Actions and practices construct and reveal an organization's culture as well as its subcultures and countercultures.³⁷ As a result of this, culture as narrative and dialogue can be described as:

Actions and practices which serve as the symbolic resources for cultural narratives and dialogues. Stories about the meanings of organizational actions and practices are often interpreted through the telling (and retelling) of organizational narratives. That is, actions and practices - together with their interpretations, are the language of organizational dialogues. Cultures are composed of ongoing dialogues that are variously complicit or engaged. A dialogue is complicit when the individuals or groups participating in it go along with the dominant interpretation of meaning. It is engaged when the individuals or groups struggle against a dominant interpretation and try to motivate action based on an alternative explanation. In most organizations most of the time you can find both complicit and engaged resources for dialogues. For this reason, an organizational culture is necessarily a conflicted environment, a site of multiple meanings engaged in a constant struggle for interpretive control.³⁸

³⁷ Ibid., 136-137.

³⁸ Ibid., 137-140.

Organizational action and practice are represented in their stories which tell of the groups interest, beliefs, and values.³⁹

Within any group, there comes a period in which it needs to be revitalized. This indicates that for some reason or another, the group has lost a sense of understanding to its narrative and dialogue. This is not to say that these stories no longer hold meaning to that group, only that they have lost their power or ability to influence that culture in a forward, progressive movement. Speaking to the issue of revitalization, Anthony Wallace states,

A revitalization movement is defined as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture. Revitalization is thus, from a cultural standpoint, a special kind of culture change phenomenon: the persons involved in the process of revitalization must perceive their culture, or some major areas of it, as a system (whether accurately or not); they must feel that this cultural system is unsatisfactory; and they must innovate not merely discrete items, but a new cultural system, specifying new relationships as well as, in some cases, new traits.⁴⁰

Wallace goes on to argue that for a culture to change, it is necessary for all persons involved in that group to maintain the same image for that culture in order to act in ways which reduce stress at all levels of the organization. This process of imaging Wallace calls, "the mazeway."⁴¹ He goes on to say that in order to change the mazeway of group members, it requires changing the

³⁹ For more information concerning cultural studies in organizations as they pertain to the use of symbols, language, stories, rites and rituals see Hackman and Johnson pages 141-168.

⁴⁰ Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologist, 58, no. 2 (1956): 265. Kenneth Tollefson also sees the book of Nehemiah operating around four social processes: 1) the innovation, 2) the community development, 3) cultural revitalization, and 4) the consolidation process. For further reading on Tollefson's view see "Nehemiah, Model for Change Agents: A Social Science Approach to Scripture," Christian Scholar's Review 15, no. 2 (1986): 107-124. This process is also used as a model for cultural revitalization as Christian missions endeavor in Christian "Community Development". Kenneth Tollefson, "The Nehemiah Model of Christian Missions," Missiology: An International Review 15, no. 1 (1987): 33-55.

⁴¹ Wallace, 266.

total image of self, society, culture, and present ways of action. Thus, revitalization requires the efforts and collaboration of a number of persons within the group. Therefore, the term revitalization denotes a large scale change in perception and group attitude from what it previously operated under. ⁴².

⁴² Ibid.

Chapter 5

Nehemiah: The Leader

Nehemiah in light of current leadership theories: a structural analysis

As the last chapter alluded to, leadership is a complex process which involves interpersonal cooperation between the leader and those who are to be lead. Fiedler points out that group members will implicitly or explicitly allow one person to make certain decisions and judgments for them in order to accomplish the groups task. Therefore, leadership can only be carried out in a group which wants to accomplish a goal. Thus, the effectiveness of a leader depends not only on that person, but also on those he/she leads, and the condition under which he/she must operate.¹

As we begin to assess the leadership of Nehemiah, it must be realized from the start that though this work has briefly looked at a few theories of leadership, these are by no means the only theories which have been developed from within this field of study. Much has been written on the subject of leadership, some of which has been quite useful. Others have contributed little if anything to our overall understanding of leadership. Thus as we approach the use of these theories they must first be assessed for their value before they can be applied to any practical use. Another difficulty in examining one's leadership, particularly from a literary source, is the tendency to want to read more into the person's abilities than the text may be telling us about them. Therefore, the danger faced in assessing a theory comes (as it relates to a person known only through a literary source) from ones desire to enforce a theory (whether good or bad) upon a leader

¹ Fred E. Fiedler, Martin M. Chemers, and Linda Mahar, Improving Leadership Effectiveness (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976), 2.

rather than allowing the operation of a theory to emanate out of the information we are given about that person from within the text.

Therefore, in beginning to investigate Nehemiah's leadership qualities in light of these theories, care needs to be exercised that these theories are not imposed onto the text, but rather that out of the text might emerge the operation of the theories. As we begin to examine the book of Nehemiah, we see right from the opening chapters that he was a man who was in and amongst people of leadership and authority. He was placed in the presence of the king as a person of trust, being the king's cupbearer. This may in part have contributed to his successes in Jerusalem. Power and authority are usually privileges which have been granted by those with power and authority over another. It is clear from the start that Nehemiah is granted these privileges in two different ways. First in authority to return and rebuild Jerusalem (2:8) and later as governor of Judah (5:15, 18). This in and of itself may have contributed greatly to his success. Yet, anyone can be forced to follow. But this does not seem to be the case with those who followed Nehemiah; they did so willingly. This begins to give us insight into the leadership qualities of Nehemiah, being a man who, first knew how to deal with people, and secondly, knew when to take a more passive approach to leadership and when to enforce his will upon those he lead or those who stood in opposition to the goals he desired to see the group achieve.

This leads to the conclusion that Nehemiah has and uses the skills which we have classified in chapter four as the situational approach of leadership, more specifically Fiedler's understanding of the situational approach as seen in the contingency theory. This is exemplified throughout the text as Nehemiah utilizes different means in different circumstances to achieve the goals of the group. What seems to distinguish Nehemiah from Fielder's contingency model

though is that Nehemiah appears to operate from the premise of both the task-oriented and relationship-oriented perspective. This can be seen throughout the book as he shows a strong relationship-orientation as he weeps when hearing the word Hanani brings him concerning the Jews living in Jerusalem (1:1-4). This concern for the people is seen throughout the book (1:4-11; 2:3,5, 17; 4:14; 5:6-13, 15-18; 8:9-12; 13:30). Though Nehemiah shows a strong relational orientation towards the people, he also appears to project a strong attitude towards the task-orientation as can be seen in his request of the king that he be allowed to return to Judah, allowed to rebuild the city, that he be granted a specific amount of time to complete the job, that he be provided with letters of passage and building supplies (2:5-8). Here too can one see throughout the book his strong task-orientation (2:11-18; 3:1-32; 4:6, 10-13, 16-23; 6:9, 15; 7:1-4; 12:31; 13:11-13, 19-22, 25).

The ability that Nehemiah has to move between the task and relationship orientation may be what categorizes him as such a successful leader. Not primarily focused on only one aspect or the other, he is able both to meet the needs of the people and to see that the reconstruction process moves forward in a timely manner.

As the situational approach deals with task and relationships between the leader and the group, so it also relates to a leader's ability to modify his or her leadership style to deal with the situations they may be presently facing. Thus, a leader working out of the contingency model will be able to shift their mode of leadership between the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire to best achieve the group goals. As can be seen in table 5.1, Nehemiah appears to have this ability to match the situation with the proper leadership style.

TABLE 5.1

Autocratic	Democratic	Laissez-faire
<p>2:20 Nehemiah replies with strong words of authority to those who would oppose his work.</p> <p>4:10-15 Although Nehemiah seems willing to consult with others concerning matters of protection (4:9), he is also willing to take matters into his own hands to insure that protection (13b).</p> <p>4:16-23 Nehemiah enforces those working on the wall to work with their weapons in defense of the city.</p> <p>5:6-13 Nehemiah compels the nobles and officials to stop their harsh practice of extracting interest on those working on the wall.</p> <p>7:1-3 Nehemiah indicates his authority by the placement of guards at the gates, and determining when the gates shall be open and closed.</p> <p>12:31 Nehemiah appoints the groups to their places upon the wall for the dedication ceremony.</p> <p>13:8-13 Nehemiah takes charge of removing Tobiah from the "house of God", orders that the</p>	<p>2:1-8 Nehemiah engages the king in the active decision making process. Nehemiah does not simply ask for time off, but allows for a period of questioning which allows the king to formulate a response based on Nehemiah's input.</p> <p>2:17-18 Through the texts use of the third person, Nehemiah engages in a democratic style of leadership with the people allowing them to be part of the decision making process. As a result they work together as a team (18c).</p> <p>4:7-9 Shows Nehemiah's ability to seek out others in the decision making process when it comes to matters of security.</p> <p>5:14-19 Nehemiah shows his ability to participate in the same work that he has asked others to do.</p>	<p>1:4-11 This prayer shows Nehemiah to be actively engaged in leadership from within the subdued posture of prayer.</p> <p>4:4-5 Nehemiah responds to the taunts of his repressors with a word of prayer rather than hostility.</p> <p>4:9 Nehemiah prays for protection against hostile opposition.</p> <p>6:14 Nehemiah prays for the evil acts of others to be remembered by God.</p> <p>13: 14, 22, 29, 31 Nehemiah prays that his deeds be remembered.</p>

Autocratic	Democratic	Laissez-faire
<p>chambers be cleaned and refurnished with the proper utensils and confronted the issue with the officials as to how the temple chambers came to be empty enough to have allowed Tobiah space within. Finally he reappointed the Levites and priest.</p> <p>13:17-22 Nehemiah reestablishes the observance of the Sabbath.</p> <p>13.25-30 Nehemiah deals with the issue of foreign marriage.</p>		

As can be seen here, Nehemiah appears to be able to evaluate the situation he is presently in and respond with the proper leadership approach to maximize effectiveness and results. Furthermore, Nehemiah seems to move between these three styles quite freely. It appears that he uses them in proportion to their effectiveness. That is to say in the case of the laissez-faire style, though it is a form of leadership, it is also one which should be used sparingly. This Nehemiah seems to be able to do. He also functions well in both the authoritarian and democratic styles utilizing each of them as the situation requires.

One note which needs to be mentioned here concerning the Laissez-faire leadership style of Nehemiah is that he begins his leadership of the people even before he ever arrived in Jerusalem. As he comes into an attitude

of prayer he was already beginning to show his concern for those living in Judea. It is here that even as the cupbearer before the Persian king, Nehemiah is already utilizing his leadership skills. Although prayer seems a passive or even an avoidance response to many, those who have a deep understanding of the sovereignty of God know the immense power found behind the act of prayer. Beyond this book's focus on Nehemiah as leader of Judeans in Jerusalem, here in a sense, he puts himself in a position of "leading" the king as he petitions God to soften the heart of the king and grant favor to him in the presence of the king (1:11). It is in this act, that he gets everything he needs to leave Susa and begin the restoration of Jerusalem.

Concerning the study of cultural communication operating within the book of Nehemiah, table 5.2 gives a definition for the principles of group communications operating throughout the text.² It is from this definition that we will explore the means by which the book of Nehemiah exhibits the pattern of group communication.

Table 5.2

In summarizing the field of cultural studies (ethnographic), as it is utilized within the discipline of communication studies, it can be said that a group is that with:

1. A pattern of shared basic assumptions,
2. invented, discovered, or developed by a given group,
3. as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration,
4. that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore,
5. is to be taught to new members of the group as the
6. correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

² Eric M. Eisenberg and H.L. Goodall, Jr., Organizational Communication: Balancing Creativity and Constraint (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 46.

It is here we see Nehemiah as a leader who motivates these people to step forward and better their own living conditions and restore their sense of national identity. In looking at Nehemiah as a leader from this definition of cultural communication, it is seen throughout the text that Nehemiah continually motivates these people from a cultural understanding. In examining culture from this definition it can be seen in table 5.3 that the book of Nehemiah projects these communication characteristics of a group.

Table 5.3

Definition	Examples
1	<p>Pattern of shared basic assumptions</p> <p>* found in their cultural heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - history: as a covenant community (1:5-10; 8:1; 9:5-38). - faith: as a covenant community (9:5-38). - family: within the covenant community (3:1-32; 4:13,14; 7:5-65). - occupation: within the covenant community (3:1-32).
2	<p>invented, discovered, or developed by a group</p> <p>* Found in their faith history.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - God's calling them out of bondage (5:8; 9:5-38) - God's judgment on them in their unfaithfulness (1:6-8; 9:5-38).
3	<p>as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration,</p> <p>* External adaptation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - living under foreign rule (1:3; 2:3). - oppression/opposition (2:19; 4:1-3,7-11; 6:1-9,19). - poor social conditions (2:17). <p>* Internal integration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - corruption of the religious structure (6:10-13; 13:4-8). - corruption of the social structure (5:1-11).

Definition	Examples
4	<p>that has worked well enough to be considered valid,</p> <p>* recognition that the law and worship of God is essential to Jewish life. - faith in the redemption of God (1:9-10; 2:18; 9:5-38).</p>
5	<p>is to be taught to new members of the group</p> <p>* Reading of the law before all the Jewish people. - separation of foreigners (8:1-8; 9:2; 10:28; 13:1-3, 23-30).</p>
6	<p>as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.</p> <p>* Commitment to renew Deuteronomic covenant. - renewal of covenant (5:9; 9:5-38; 10:28-39) - renewal of worship (8:14; 9:3, 5-38; 10:28-39; 13:15-21)</p>

From within this context, not only are the anthropological concerns of the group being met, but they are inevitably communicating something to one another in a way which is esoteric to this particular group of people.

Stemming from this evaluation of Nehemiah in light of the situational theory of leadership and the cultural evaluation of communication inherent within the group, it can be seen that modern theories of leadership can be informative as we begin to evaluate biblical personalities and their approaches to leadership. It is intended that this work be used to show that the training one receives in his/her undergraduate studies can and should be applied in his/her seminary training in order to gain a more complete understanding of the principles of effective leadership as it is seen in those we study in the biblical text. It is from this point that one can develop his/her own approach to effective pastoral leadership.

Evaluation of the problem

It has been the purpose of this study to explore present theories of communication surrounding the principles of effective leadership and then to determine the leadership of Nehemiah based on these theories. It is noted here that great pains were taken in order not to project these social science theories onto the text, but rather to let the text speak to the theories.

Overall in the examination of the problem statement the purpose of this thesis was met. It has been determined that the person of Nehemiah, as we see him in the book which carries the same name, does project a method of leadership that can be categorized within the communication theory known as the situational theory of leadership, more specifically Fielder's contingency model of leadership. It has been shown here that the person of Nehemiah seems to project both the task-orientation to leadership as well as the relationship-orientation. It has also been determined that Nehemiah is able to be flexible enough in his leadership style to sift between the autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire styles depending on the situation in which he finds himself.

When looking at the area of cultural (ethnographic) communication it is here that we move from the examination of the person Nehemiah to the literary structure and concerns of the book as a whole. It is through the study of the structural movement and the concerns of the writer, for the people living in Jerusalem, that we begin to see how this group (Nehemiah included within the whole) viewed themselves as a people group set apart from those cultures which surrounded them. It is through this ethnographic study that we begin to get a glimpse of what was important to them from a cultural perspective. This is an important observation to make as it will determine for

this group what type of person (such as Nehemiah) will be allowed to inspire them to be lead towards achieving the group's goals.

The purpose of this study has focused around discovering if in fact biblical personalities did implement forms of leadership which could be recognized from our present day understanding of the principles which inform us today about the dynamics surrounding effective leadership. It has been shown through this study that we can in fact draw implications of what makes a good or poor leader, as the biblical text portrays those in positions of leadership, by examining their leadership in light of our present understanding of leadership theories.

The questions that this study tend to raise as we try to bring these two fields of study together are:

1) How does our understanding of these communication theories enhance our understanding of biblical personalities and their abilities to be either good or poor leaders?

2) How do these theories, in light of the biblical person, inform us today on how to be a good and effective leader?

3) How does the study of this book inform us ethnographically about these people and what they see as essential to them as a distinct people group?

These questions are but a few raised for your pondering and further study.

Implications for the present day church

As we have seen, Nehemiah has proven himself to be a competent skilled leader. To this issue Edwin Yamauchi states that, "Nehemiah provides one of

the most vivid patterns of leadership in the Scriptures."³ He then goes on to list these seven characteristics of Nehemiah the leader:

1. He was a man of responsibility, as shown by his position as the royal cupbearer.

2. He was a man of vision. He knew who God was and what He could do through His servants. Nehemiah was not, however, a visionary, but instead was a man who planned and then acted.

3. He was a man of prayer. He prayed spontaneously and constantly even in the presence of the king (Neh. 2:4-5).

4. He was a man of action and of cooperation. He realized what had to be done, explained it to others, and enlisted their aid.

Nehemiah, a layman, was able to cooperate with his contemporary, Ezra, the scribe and priest, in spite of the fact that these two leaders were of different personalities. In reaction to the intermarriage of the people, Ezra plucked out his own hair (Ezra 9:3) whereas Nehemiah pulled out the hair of the offenders (Neh. 13:25)!

5. He was a man of compassion. He was moved by the plight of the poorer members of society so that he renounced his rights (Neh. 5:18) and denounced the greed of the wealthy (Neh. 5:8).

6. He was a man who triumphed over opposition. His opponents tried ridicule (Neh. 4:3), attempted slander (Neh. 6:5-7), and spread misleading messages (Neh. 6:10-14). But Nehemiah would not be distracted or discouraged.

7. He was a man who was rightly motivated. The last words of Nehemiah, "Remember me, O my God, for good" (13:31), recapitulate an oft-repeated theme running through the final chapter (vv. 14, 22, 29). His motive throughout this ministry was to please and to serve his divine sovereign Lord.⁴

In light of these principles and what we have discovered in our study of Nehemiah and leadership, how can the church apply current models of leadership from a biblical perspective to the training of good leaders? In looking at these principles listed above, several observations can be made concerning leadership and how our understanding of the theories relating to leadership from a biblical perspective can inform us as we prepare people in the church to assume the role of leadership.

First, the task of responsibility is developed in the home. One learns responsibility not through being passive but active. Today's church leaders

³ Edwin M. Yamauchi, "The Archaeological Background of Nehemiah," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 37, no. 548 (1980): 304.

⁴ Ibid; Yamauchi further expounds on each of these seven points in M. Peterson, ed., *A Spectrum of Thought* (1982), 171-180.

need to be applying to this education of their parishioners the biblical truths of family and division of responsibility within the family. It is through the acting out of responsibility in the home, that a child begins to learn the principles of leadership. How the parent delegates tasks from an authoritative ("it is your responsibility to make your bed"), democratic ("come help me put the dishes away, do you want the silverware or the cups?"), or laissez-faire ("Please set the table for dinner, I will help if needed.") style will determine what view and form of leadership this person is likely to develop and utilize in their own adult life. An imbalance of one of these styles in the home will create an imbalanced view of leadership in life. Good leadership, therefore, grows out of the home, and the home should be an extension of the church.

Secondly, a leader is a person of vision. No plan has ever been achieved without first being conceived. Here again it is within the home that leaders are born. How does the parent encourage the child to act on his/her creative thoughts? How often are the child's inventions put down as trivial or unimportant, given little or no praise. In the same way, how often do new ideas for community outreach or evangelism in the church get pushed off as impossible, too costly, or impractical? Nehemiah was a man who knew what needed to be done, envisioned how it should happen, asked for the materials to move forward, and did not allow those who would discourage him from his work to stop his vision of a restored people and city. The church today needs to be an encourager rather than a discourager as it seeks ways to minister the gospel.

Thirdly, Nehemiah knew what it meant to be a servant. Each day he was in the service of the king, he laid his life on the line for the king. With this in mind, Nehemiah carries this principle of servant leadership with him to Jerusalem as he actively participates in the rebuilding of the city. Thus, a

leader knows that the true principles of good leadership stem from the ability to serve.

Fourth, Nehemiah was a man of prayer. Charles Swindoll states, "The mark of a serious leader is he [she] goes first to God with the problem."⁵ Prayer is action, it may appear to be a form of laissez-faire leadership on the outside, but it is acting on behalf of the present situation. Swindoll marks these four benefits to placing a high priority on prayer. First, prayer forces you to wait. One cannot work and pray at the same time, so prayer forces one to leave the situation in the hands of God. Secondly, prayer clears one's vision, it causes one to see with clarity what lays ahead of them and how to best handle the demands of leadership. Thirdly, prayer quiets the heart. First reactions are often the wrong actions. Prayer stills the storms of the heart. Fourth, prayer activates faith. Through prayer we better see the will of God and are more apt to trust in His judgments and guidance rather than our own.⁶

Fifth, Nehemiah was a man of action. Action is leadership and Nehemiah was not hesitant to act from an autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire mode of leadership. This can be difficult for many in leadership positions as not all situations can be responded to from an autocratic perspective, but require cooperative input from the group for compliance. Likewise, not all situations will allow for a fully democratic response, but require a quick, definitive answer. Action also relates to a leader's vision for what can be, for Nehemiah it was the restoration of both the city and the people. No vision was ever completed unless it was acted upon. Here too the church can step forward as its leader seeks to empower its members to act upon their vision for ministry.

⁵ Charles R. Swindoll, Hand Me Another Brick (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1978), 37.

⁶ Ibid., 41.

Sixth, Nehemiah was a person with compassion and influence. Good leaders, whether they utilize the democratic or autocratic style of leadership, will treat those under them with compassion.

Seventh, a good leader will celebrate the groups accomplishments not allowing failure or oppression to detour or distract from the final outcome. This comes from being rightly motivated. What are the goals of leadership, to create your own kingdom here on earth, or to serve in the kingdom of God?

Leadership is a gift from God that everyone is asked to use, whether it is in a primary classroom or as the bishop of the church. How one approaches his/her understanding of leadership will ultimately determine what kind of leader he/she will be.

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